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ABSTRACT

The ESR Journal presents educational frameworks that promote divergent viewpoints, stimulate critical thinking about controversial issues, teach creative and productive ways of dealing with differences, promote cooperative problem solving, and foster informed decision making. The theme of this particular issue is: "Educating for Democracy." The 8 articles in this volume are grouped under three topics: (1) democracy and school reform; (2) democracy in a changing society; and (3) democracy at work in the classroom. The first section includes 3 articles: (1) "Education for Democracy: Public Life, Public Values, and Power" (Frances Moore Lappe; Paul Martin Du Bois); (2) "Democratic Schools at Risks" (George Wood); and (3) "The Hanover High School Council" (Marilyn Blight). The second section contains two articles: (1) "Whose Curriculum?: Cultural Diversity and Our Schools" (Laurie Olsen); and (2) "Social Justice in a Quaker School: A Process of Multicultural Change" (Carolyn R. O'Grady). The third section contains: (1) "Educating for Democracy and Community: Toward the Transformation of Power in Our Schools" (Seth Kreisberg); (2) "Democracy in the Elementary Classroom: A Curriculum for Interdependence" (Alan Medville); and (3) "Empowering the Educated: Strategies for Efficacy" (April Laskey Aerni; Deborah R. First). (DK)

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DEMOCRACY AND SCHOOL REFORM

EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRACY: PUBLIC LIFE, PUBLIC VALUES, AND POWER

Frances Moore Lappé and Paul Martin Du Bois

This article is adapted from a speech presented by Frances Moore Lappé on June 1, 1991, at the National Institute on Values and Education sponsored by the Council of Independent Colleges, St. Charles, Illinois. In the article, Lappé and Du Bois suggest that today's social and environmental problems are too complex to be solved by "top-down" strategies and decisions. Today's solutions require the creativity and commitment of many citizens. The authors outline a framework to help educators expand students' conceptualization and understanding of public life and how they can contribute to public problem solving.

The Crisis of Democracy

Educating for democracy is hardly a novel idea. It is as old as our educational system itself. Yet today the leading goal of education seems to be to ensure our economic competitiveness. At the secondary level, much current reform emphasizes more standardized testing, hardly more democracy. And at the university level, educating for democracy loses further ground to the extent that concern about "political correctness" narrows debate.

Yet despite many antidemocratic forces, there are opportunities to begin educating for democracy, perhaps more than at any period in our lives. Both our methods of public problem solving and our educational system appear to more and more Americans as dismal failures. Acknowledging failure is itself an opening; it can prompt experimentation.

Our society's failures manifest as distinct issues—poverty, drugs, economic decline, environmental degradation, and family disintegration among others. News on these conditions worsening bombards us daily. But these conditions do not create the real crisis. That crisis is best captured by studies of Americans' perceptions of public life.

In a 1989 report, *Democracy's Next Generation*, by People for the American Way, young people who were polled stated they do not see a connection between their concerns about, for example, homelessness or kids selling drugs and public policies—

either as causes or solutions. They report that they do not see political participation as a way to address the problems.

The Institute for Social Research conducts an annual survey of high school seniors. Since 1975 over 17,000 students have responded. Almost half the seniors surveyed reported that they agree or mostly agree with the statement: "I feel I can do very little to change the way the world works." Small wonder that fewer young people vote than any other age group.

Other surveys show that more and more Americans believe that government answers only to an elite group not to ordinary citizens. And in one poll a shocking one-third of Americans said that they would fear writing their representative to express an unpopular view. Such polls tell us what we already know: increasing numbers of Americans feel a widening chasm between themselves and "those people up there making the decisions." This feeling of "them, not us" contributes to a widespread and growing sense of powerlessness.

This then is the real crisis: our growing disaffection from the process of public problem solving, the growing lack of confidence in our ability to come together to solve problems. If "democracy" is the shorthand term we use for our system of public problem solving, then the real crisis is our lost confidence in democracy itself.

Today's public problems are so big, so complex, so interrelated, so pervasive that they simply cannot be solved by top-down authority. They cannot be solved without the engagement of more of us—without increasing numbers of ordinary citizens gaining the capacities to be effective problem solvers.

Solutions must be equal to the magnitude of our problems. Studies show that the greater the number of people participating in problem solving, the better the solutions that emerge. Moreover, only as more people engage in problem solving can there be full public commitment to the solutions we devise. Most of us are much more likely to make the behavior changes needed for solutions if we know that the results will benefit us. That knowledge, that assurance, depends in large measure on whether we feel part of the process of arriving at the solutions.

Thus we must educate citizens who possess the concepts, tools, and experience to be effective public problem solvers.

Educating for effective citizenship is not another in a string of needed correctives to our educational system. It is rather a holistic approach cutting to the root of diverse manifestations of educational failure. Educating for democratic public life is a path, most appropriate to public education, that educates for full personhood, for the constructive, healthy personalities that we seek for ourselves and our children.

If educating for full citizenship lies at the heart of solutions to our individual and societal ills, then how do we begin?

For decades many have responded that first we must reverse the growing concentration of wealth that skews the use of our economic resources toward private luxuries and away from addressing public problems; others cry out that first we must counteract the power of the media to pacify us with vicarious thrills and drive our competitive consumerism, which distracts us from the crying public tasks. Still others offer a moral revival to counter what they see as the downward ethical slide at the root

of our public problems. However, these diagnoses still leave our society wanting. Even assuming that we could agree on such root problems, we are left with many "how" questions. One of the major questions we are left with is: How do we create problem solvers motivated and capable of tackling our public problems, whatever the root cause?

Below we outline a framework for addressing this question.

Discovering Public Life

The first challenge is the redefinition and rediscovery of public life itself. But why, you may ask. Americans know what public life is, and they know they do not wish to be part of it. To most Americans public life entails some of the least pleasant parts of our lives—our relation to manipulative politicians, to the state, or to impersonal bureaucracies. Or public life is about dull "civics" and staid government. It is what officials do to us and for us.

Without a systematic, creative reconceptualization of public life, even the best teaching of civics falls far short of what is needed. Many innovations today counter the teaching of civics as the study of distant, fixed institutions. An example is the experience of Lappé's son. Instead of a textbook approach to civics, his high school senior government class created a mock congress. He was senate majority leader and spent endless hours on the phone, not in teen gossip, but in debating the next vote in "congress." So powerful was the experience that immediately after the course his choice of college major shifted from architecture to politics.

More significant still are reforms such as those proposed by Walter Parker at the University of Washington. He would have students prepare throughout their primary and secondary education for tests before graduating that measure ability to analyze public issues and develop thoughtful positions on public problems.

However valuable, many of these approaches still communicate that public life is essentially about our relationship to government and large political issues. These approaches do not ring true to young people because their experience does not confirm this.

We need an understanding of public life that is true to the day-to-day reality in which all of us—including young people live. That understanding must capture the richness of our modern lives and acknowledge the changes that have occurred since the still-prevailing (and now outdated) concepts of political life were formed several hundred years ago. In this evolving conceptual framework, public life embraces all our many roles outside intimate, private circles.

Most Americans spend the majority of their waking hours in either workplaces or learning institutions. Yet our current concept of public life, with its emphasis on vertical relations in the formal political sphere, excludes economic and institutional life, our daily reality. In economic life we are employees, consumers, owners, and investors, assumed to be operating by private decisions based on narrow personal gain. Yet the decisions we make in these supposedly nonpublic roles may well have more effect on the community, environment, and national well-being than the public decisions we make at the ballot box.

Similarly, our roles in institutions, such as schools and universities, are not conceived as experience in public life. They are viewed, at worst, as preparation for private careers or, at best, as preparation for future political roles as participants in public discourse and informed voters.

What might it mean to reconceive public life as all the roles we each live daily, as all the roles in which our choices and behaviors shape the quality of life for all and for future generations? The implications are breathtaking. And nothing less than such a broad and deep perspective is required if we are serious about meeting today's unprecedented threats.

Let's begin to build a conceptual framework that will enable us to recreate public life.

First, public life includes economic life. It makes sense to think of economic life as public, since today's economic units are no longer small family entities whose decisions affect only a small locality. Today's major economic units are huge, globe-spanning bureaucracies. We call them multinational corporations. Decisions of these "nonelected economic governments" can have more impact on our lives and the natural environment than those of most political governments.

Second, public life includes our roles as students and educators. These roles are explored in more depth below.

Third, public life includes our relationship to human services—doctors, social workers, psychologists, and employment offices. When we fail to think of these relationships as part of democratic public life, we become passive clients deferring to experts, often not sharing responsibility for our own well-being.

Fourth, public life includes our roles in voluntary organizations—churches, synagogues, community-based development groups, environmental organizations and so on. While these may be nonpartisan, they are powerfully political. But as long as we conceive of public life as what others do "up there," we remain at best supplicants or protesters. As we embrace these roles as part of democratic public life, we take the next step and make ourselves accountable for problem solving.

And, finally, public life includes our relationship to the state through elected representatives.

Public life embraces *all* of these roles. Our position as members of an electorate is only one dimension in an intricate web of relationships through which we create our neighborhood and the larger world.

The Purpose of Public Life

Enlarging our concept of public life to fit modern reality is only the first step in building our conceptual framework. The next logical question follows: What is the purpose of public life?

In the received, narrow understanding of public life, the answer was straightforward: our purpose is electing responsible elites to govern us wisely. This is consistent with the concept of human nature in the dominant, mechanical world view associated with the Western liberal tradition. In it, individuals are isolated atoms whose interactions are mediated by such mechanical structures and laws as the state and the marketplace.

In public life reconceived, consistent with the social view of our nature now emerging across many disciplines, the purpose of public life might be defined as twofold: to pursue our interests, as our perceptions of those interests develop continually through interaction with the interests of others, and to manifest in society our public values, as our understanding of these values evolves through interaction with diverse understandings. Self-interest is a very controversial issue. Some see it as the very antithesis of public life. From this perspective, civic virtue means squelching self-interest for the sake of the common good. We hear exhortations to replace our presumed selfishness with compassion, generosity, and mercy.

The framework suggested here is quite different. The challenge in building healthy public life is creating opportunities for citizens to understand, evolve, and act on their interests. This is the process missing today. Currently, self-interest is understood as fixed "chips" we bring to the public table, the "givens" we use to bargain for what we want. As public discourse thins, our interests may continue to be registered in polls, but seldom are they allowed to evolve through real interaction with others' interests.

But self-interest need not be the enemy of public life. It is legitimately what we bring to public life. It need not be static. In healthy public life, our self-interest develops as we interact with others.

Self-interest and selfishness are often assumed to be indistinguishable—simply whatever serves the private gain of the individual. But understanding democracy as a way of life that touches all public relationships suggests a much richer concept. Self-interest becomes one's arena of meaning, all the things that matter—family, friends, religious faith, values, career goals, security, health, and so on. It comes close to one's identity, as it connects us to all that matters outside ourselves. (Recall that the Latin root of "interest" is *inter esse*, to be among.)

The Maverick Institute in Tucson found that young people experienced a significant change in their public positions after they engaged in real dialogue on public issues. In the National Issues Forums, sponsored by the Kettering Foundation, many adults discover a similar redefinition of self-interest when they are given the opportunity to thoroughly examine their values and interests in relation to others' perspectives.

This reconceptualization of self-interest and public life challenges educators to more effectively bring out the many invisible connections between students' interests and those of others. The goal is not to preach the squelching of self-interest, but to coach students to become astute analysts of their own and others' interests so that the linkages become apparent.

The Displacement and Thinning of Discourse on Public Values

Let us turn from relational self-interest as a legitimate pursuit in public life to the second purpose we suggested lies at the heart of democratic public life: public values.

A primary purpose of public life is manifesting, bringing forth into the world, our "public values"—such exalted concepts as freedom, fairness, justice, democracy, and so on. They both justify our loyalty to, and pride in, our society and imbue our individual

lives with dignity and meaning beyond ourselves.

Unfortunately, fear of the inappropriate inculcation of private values in a public setting has distorted the debate about the role of values in public education. Throughout the 1980s, as the media focused on private value questions, such as sexual preference and reproductive matters, debate about public values has been pushed aside.

Yet public values are the mental and emotional "glue" of our common life. They are assumptions about what will work, and about what creates a healthy society. In our society freedom, fairness, and democracy are three such values. Discourse on the meaning of these values and how we manifest them through our public choices is the very heart of democratic public life and therefore of education fostering that way of life. We are not often encouraged to probe the real meanings of our public values as guideposts to creating the society we want. We have learned that it is a "free society," a "democratic" country. While we have just gone to war to further such principles, how many of us can define what these words mean?

In classroom discussions, however, we can systematically link public issues with public values and can examine how policy choices strengthen or erode our values. Most important, we can explore what we *mean* by these values.

Teaching the Concepts and Practical Arts of Democracy

How do we teach the concepts and practical arts of democratic public life?

Democratic public life is not something we are born knowing. Like music, reading, or basketball, we learn the arts of democratic public life through experience. And, like all arts and sports, we enjoy them only as we learn to do them well. If we feel awkward and foolish for too long, we just stop. If, however, we begin to learn the particular challenges and rewards of an art, we persevere even when our "performance" is far from perfect.

What are the democratic arts, the particular capacities that citizens cultivate in order to act with effectiveness and wisdom in the public world?

Dialogue, active listening, analyzing, and participating in power through collaborative problem solving, negotiation, and planning are some of these arts; these pay special attention to the creative use of conflict, that is, using conflict for learning. The arts of reflection and evaluation are also necessary for developing group and collective memory, which is essential to healthy public life.

We learn these arts by doing them. Let's take a look at how this works using one of the arts, dialogue. What is dialogue? Unlike debate, where we marshall facts to dig in our heels, dialogue is about listening and probing. Real dialogue, engaging diverse perspectives, is the only way to transform our public values from useless clichés to useful guides.

We have hardly reached consensus on the fundamental values about which we converse. Opening up our deepest public values to dialogue suggests that—contrary to some widely held, but poorly examined assumptions—we do not automatically have fairness, freedom, or democracy in our society just because we enjoy the official hallmarks of democratic government, i.e., elections, multiple parties, and an indepen-

dent judicial branch. It is up to each of us—and to our public culture as a whole—to 'efine and actualize such public values. And it is in the classroom that we can begin.

A few years ago, Lappé wrote a dialogue in *Rediscovering America's Values* (1989) that demonstrates Americans' contrasting perspectives on the meaning of "freedom." Below is an adapted excerpt from that book.

> *Voice one: The more [freedom] we have, the freer we are, the less we have to listen to others.*
> In this view, freedom easily becomes unrestricted accumulation, a view captured particularly well by Ronald Reagan. In 1983 he proclaimed, "What I want to see above all else is that this country remain a country where someone can always get rich." Materially defined, freedom becomes a finite, zero-sum quantity.
>
> *Voice two: Freedom is not unrestricted accumulation but the possibility for unfettered human growth.*
> For many people—and in most religious traditions—freedom is not an end in itself. Rather, its purpose is the development of the uniquely human and individually unique potentialities of each person—be they intellectual, physical, artistic, or spiritual. Freedom is no longer finite or zero-sum.

One view emphasizes freedom from interference from others, especially the state. Another sees freedom as the capacity to participate in public life, to share in decision making. In one view, freedom means being left alone by the powerful; in the other, freedom is the capacity to participate in power.

Differences in these views are not mere abstractions. They result in very different concrete public choices. But without public discussion, beginning in the classroom, that goes beneath clichés to the meaning of our public values, we cannot foster the emergence of citizens who have thought through the consequences of their value loyalties, citizens who can work constructively to realize their values in the public world.

This leads us into a discussion of another democratic art, analyzing and participating in power through collaborative problem solving. In this art, the prevailing world view of power presents a major obstacle: It is one-directional and seems manipulative and corrupt. One educator asked her students to line up according to how much power they believed they possessed. Students fought to be last in line! Power is dirty. Even if we wanted power, we would be unwilling to admit it.

There are several problems with this view. First, if power is dirty, powerlessness must be virtuous. We are tempted to cling to our powerlessness, taking comfort in our evident virtue. Second, a one-directional, mechanistic view of democracy blinds us to the fact that power is always a relationship. Every interaction changes all the parties involved. It follows that no one is ever completely powerless, completely unable to change others and change oneself. Categories of actor and acted-upon are no longer mutually exclusive.

Through observation, dialogue, and reflection on experience we can learn to

perceive power differently, to recover its original meaning, "to be able." If power is that which enables, then its potential for mutual expansion becomes obvious.

How do students come to perceive and participate in relational power and develop knowledge of their self-interests in order to achieve purpose and efficacy in public life? And how as educators do we teach active listening, dialogue, reflection, evaluation?

First, we coach and mentor in the classroom. As educators we can actively facilitate students' expanded understanding of public life and their role in it.

Second, we teach the democratic arts by modeling. It is not possible to teach democracy in an autocracy. Students cannot learn to be active participants in society and public problem solving if they do not share responsibility for the classroom experience, for their own learning, and for the institution's healthy functioning.

In one very successful public high school we visited recently, teachers assume that students will shape the direction of every course, and the students are actively consulted at the beginning about what they want out of the course and about the method of evaluation. Students sit on committees that review and evaluate teachers and set school policy in town meetings. This public school has been working, exceptionally well, for eighteen years.

Third, we teach democratic arts and concepts as we link the curriculum to real-life problem solving.

How do we do this? One answer lies in what is commonly called "community service." Replacing a community-service framework with an "arts of public life" has important ramifications. In the former, students are often perceived as more privileged people who are helping (or serving) the less privileged. In the latter, all are expected to participate in order to learn the skills of effective public problem solving, which are essential to applying virtually all the other lessons the curriculum offers. In a democratic public life framework, students participate in community problem solving in order to learn to analyze and wield power, to perceive one's own and others' interests, to negotiate, to mediate, to make decisions collaboratively.

This framework applies in all grade levels. In Bill Elasky's sixth-grade classes in Amesville, Ohio, young people are encouraged and coached on how to use their newly acquired knowledge to solve real problems. One year they tackled the problem of a toxic spill in the town's creek, organized themselves as the Amesville Sixth Grade Water Chemists, and became the town's water-quality-control team. In Lee County, Florida, high school students have awakened their entire community to the need to preserve wetlands; they developed an educational campaign that mustered public support to create a state park.

If engagement in real community problem solving is reconceived as training for effective public life, then it makes sense to ensure that all students have this experience.

At the Institute for the Arts of Democracy, we are analyzing lessons from a variety of public schools and successfully teaching for democracy. Experiments include a high school in upstate New York that operates as a consensual democracy, another in Massachusetts that runs as a parliamentary democracy, and a third in Harlem that is

built on a comprehensive philosophy of student empowerment and shared responsibility. The schools are working because they foster an educational environment in which

- learning takes place through shared responsibility and in which young people discover that public life is what *they* create every day by their own choices, not simply a matter of distant authority.
- students feel empowered to give meaning to society's core public values, in which students can discover that their school's and our society's values are not fixed but depend upon their discovery and actualization by each of us. This creates purposeful and morally grounded citizens who participate in real dialogue.
- students may practice and hone the democratic arts—active listening, creative controversy, mediation, reflection, effective use of power, collaborative problem solving and so on—so that they experience themselves as problem solvers now, not in some far-off distant future. This creates motivated and effective citizens.

Our hope lies in the emergence of more and more citizens—effective problem solvers and morally grounded cocreators. In a time of such unprecedented opportunity, it is worth taking the risks necessary to create educational environments that do not simply teach "about" but embody democratic public life, that prepare citizens eager for its challenges and incomparable rewards.

Frances Moore Lappé and Paul Martin Du Bois are cofounders and codirectors of the Institute for the Arts of Democracy (IAD). IAD is an interactive membership organization that promotes "democracy as a way of life." Through its Living Democracy Learning Center, IAD develops and disseminates innovative educational tools and provides workshops and public presentations nationwide. IAD's goal is to support "ordinary people" taking democratic initiative in every sector of American society.

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DEMOCRATIC SCHOOLS AT RISK

George Wood

In this chapter, excerpted from his forthcoming book Schools That Work, George Wood examines the impact of the "legislated excellence" movement in public school reform. This movement, defined as the series of state-level curriculum and performance mandates, is based on recommendations by a myriad of commissioned governmental groups. Wood argues that the overemphasis on what is wrong with schools and the vocational focus of public schooling may actually contribute to the increased failure of schools as places where "application and imagination" thrive and democratic classrooms exist.

Since the late 1970s public attention has focused on the quality of American schools. Report after report has drawn public ire down on the schools for their failure to adequately prepare young people to add, understand maps, or recite important historical dates. The local schoolhouse, once seen as a pillar of virtue and civic strength, has come to symbolize for many what is wrong with America today. The bill of particulars includes a lowering of standards for acceptable work, insufficient devotion and loyalty to the nation, and wasteful expenditures of public resources.

By now, most of us are well aware of the criticisms heaped upon the schools. Headline writers have had a field day producing such gems as "Schools Get an F," "Why Teacher Can't Teach," and "Illiterate Student Granted High School Diploma." But behind those headlines is a point of view, an agenda for public schooling that is seldom debated: increasing school achievement to promote greater economic productivity.

It has become commonplace to assume that the current concern over public education began with the release in 1983 of *A Nation at Risk* by the Reagan administration's National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE). While Americans have debated the purpose and quality of their schools since the first school opened in the colonies, it is fair to say that the slim, sixty-five page report did put schools front and center in the public eye. Despite countless errors of fact and nuance, the report's findings and recommendations were taken up in a new campaign to

reform the schools.

The findings of the NCEE were couched in the most alarmist of terms. America is, it seems, at risk from a "rising tide of mediocrity" in our educational institutions that threatens "our very future as a Nation and a people." The dire nature of the situation was indicated primarily by declining test scores and a growth of remedial classes. The Cold War rhetoric of the report saw these failures as a result of "unilateral educational disarmament." In fact, if "an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war."[1]

Numerous reports took up the refrain of a failing educational system. In 1983 alone, with much fanfare, the Education Commission of the States (ECS), the National Science Foundation (NSF), and the Twentieth Century Fund (TCF) all released reports echoing *A Nation At Risk*. Uniformly relying upon declines in test scores, each report sounded an alarm designed to shock Americans into action. TCF found schools to be "in trouble by almost every measure—the commitment and competency of teachers, student test scores, truancy and drop-out rates, crimes of violence"—and concluded that "the performance of our schools falls far short of expectations." And NSF feared that the "nation that dramatically and boldly led the world into the age of technology is failing to provide its own children with the intellectual tools needed for the 21st century."[2]

These reports seemed only to whet the public appetite for school criticism. The 1980s saw a continuing flow of reports on schooling, focusing on what our students seemed not to know in math, science, government, geography, and virtually all the other subject matter areas. Open season had been declared on the public schools, and everyone wanted in on the act.

All of this sound and fury seems to have crested at the close of the decade with the "education summits" called by President Bush. In September 1989 the President and the governors of every state met to examine the health of our schools. By February 1990 the governors noted that "a well-educated population is the key to our future," but that "in the past, our [educational] standards have not been very demanding."

What is behind this torrent of criticism? Perhaps the first thing to admit is that much of the criticism is true. There are too many poor teachers, too many children getting out of school knowing too little, and too much watered-down curriculum. But, to some degree, this has always been the case. Schools are just asked to do too much for too little to be good all the time in all places. Imagine if you will what mentality really expects a school to teach, in one place, for five to seven hours a day, all of the following: reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, history, science (of all sorts), physical fitness, personal hygiene, music, and art; and, to provide for those same children athletic entertainment, social events, clubs of all descriptions, counseling, sex education; and to simultaneously work on those elusive attitudinal and psychological skills that will combat racism and sexism and develop in each child a positive self-concept. All this, for as little as $2,500 a year per child in some states. By the way, all of these services, and more (did I forget to add breakfast and lunch?), are offered to every single child in the community from the ages of five to eighteen (three to twenty-

one for children with disabilities) regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, or religion.

So perhaps we should expect mediocrity in the face of this challenge—and be surprised by excellence. Not really. Every parent, every community has a right to good schools for all our children. The problem is sorting out to what end the schools should work. Because schools are everywhere, because we all have some connection with them, they too often are seen as both scapegoat and panacea for whatever problem adults find themselves facing. Any large social crisis for which no easy solution is available tends to come to rest at the schoolhouse door. If only the schools had produced better ***fill in the blank***, the reasoning goes, then we would not be facing this problem. While we adults do not have the will to solve it now, we'll make sure it never happens again by instituting the following program, again, ***fill in the blank***, in our schools. Thus, the sins of the past are visited upon children every day in the classroom.

In recent memory the clearest example of the schoolhouse as scapegoat was the Sputnik crisis of the 1950s. When the Soviet Union launched its first artificial earth satellite, Americans were faced with losing the space race to our Cold War nemesis. Our response was rather surprising. Rather than fault American political leaders (wrapped up in the paranoia of the McCarthy hearings), American industry (busy with profit-making domestic goods and unconcerned with public services), or the scientific community (still basking in the glow of the atomic bomb), attention was turned to (where else?) the schools. The critiques of the fifties sound strikingly similar to those we hear nearly thirty years later. It was perhaps Vice-Admiral Hyram Rickover, "father of the nuclear navy", who summed up the feeling of the decade: "We are in our present predicament because education in American has deteriorated in quality for lack of standards."[3]

So what was the solution to this failure of standards? First one had to understand that the threat from the Soviet Union was primarily, in the eyes of school critics, a stimulus to alert us to the problems with schools. In particular, American industry was not being provided with an adequate work force that would meet the international challenge of technological change. The solution to this was put forth most influentially by James Conant in his 1959 report on the American high school. His summary of twenty-one points for improving public secondary education foreshadows the lists produced by today's reformers: ability grouping, a core program of basic disciplines, more time spent on English composition, elective programs for the academically talented, required science courses, and generally a more vigorous curriculum overall. Conant's points were only slightly different from the recommendations of the Council for Basic Education also issued in 1959, which called for four years of English, French, German, and history; three years of math; and two years of science.

All the curricular reform was to be accompanied by a nationwide search for talent. A major reform report of the era carries this key recommendation: "The general academic capacity of students should be at least tentatively identified by the eighth grade as a result of repeated testings and classroom performance in the elementary grades." Once talent was found it was to be nurtured and cultivated as a national resource, which would lead to a more productive citizenry. For those who forgot this agenda, there was always the National Defense Education Act of 1958 to remind us that

the main purpose of schooling was to ensure "trained manpower of sufficient quality and quantity to meet the national defense needs of the United States."[4]

The careful student of history would not be surprised by the rhetoric of the 1950s. At the beginning of this century public schooling was seized upon as the ideal way to inculcate appropriate work habits in immigrants. Even as early as the 1860s Horace Mann, the first state superintendent of public education, called for schools to be utilized as "the great balance wheel of society." Schooling, according to Mann "does better than disarm the poor of their hostility toward the rich; it prevents being poor."[5]

In these voices of the past we hear the forerunners of today's attack on schools. During each of these periods the concern was with the nation's economy. We are a people preoccupied with the boxscores of international economic competition; the GNP and balance of trade figures are read like a doctor reads a patient's vital signs. Whenever it appears that we are slipping in our ability to consume the world's highest standard of living, we blame it on the schools.

Today's armchair critics are merely repeating the cycle. Let's return to the reports themselves:

> *Our schools are not doing an adequate job of education for today's requirements in the work place, much less tomorrow's. If we are serious about economic growth in America—about improving productivity; about recapturing competitiveness in our basic industries and maintaining it in our new industries; about guaranteeing to our children a decent standard of living and a rewarding quality of life, then we must get serious about improving education. And we must start now.*[6]

> *Already the quality of our manufactured products, the viability of our trade, our leadership in research and development, and our standards of living are strongly challenged. Our children could be strugglers in a world of technology. We must not let this happen; America must not become an industrial dinosaur.*[7]

> *If only to keep and improve on the slim competitive edge we still retain in world markets, we must dedicate ourselves to the reform of our educational system.*[8]

Even the "Education President," George Bush, and the nation's governors are caught up in the emotion of the moment. In the report from their 1989 summit meeting on education they declaimed: "The President and the nation's governors agree that a better educated citizenry is the key to the continued growth and prosperity of the United States.... As a nation, we must have an educated work force, second to none, in order to succeed in an increasingly competitive world economy."[9] And while in the governors' 1990 document prominence is given to the schools' role in preparing citizens to "participate in our democracy" and "function effectively in increasingly diverse communities," most of their recommendations are tied to economic productivity, the ability to enter the job market, and our ability to keep pace economically in the world market.

Once again the schools are to blame for a problem that lies beyond the school-

house door. As one teacher has put it:

> *The good gray managers of the U.S., the fellows who gave us Wonder Bread, the Pinto, hormone- laden beef wrapped in Styrofoam, and* People *magazine—not to mention acid rain, the Kansas City Hyatt, $495 hammers, and political campaigns—are now loudly screaming that we teachers should mend our slothful ways and get back to excellence. I would invite the corporate leaders, the politicians, and the professional consultants to climb down from their insular glass towers before casting any more stones of censure at, or even advice about, my lack of excellence in the classroom. Life in the Eighties is complicated. All of us are, in Thomas Hardy's words, "people distressed by events they did not cause." There is no reason for teachers alone to shoulder the blame.*[10]

These critics of schools might not be the most reliable sources available, and they do in fact have the equation wrong. At no time in the history of this or any other industrialized nation has increasing school achievement led to greater economic productivity. It is precisely the other way around—increases in economic productivity lead to increases in school attainment and achievement. Furthermore, it is difficult to believe that the most crucial problem facing American industry is the lack of an educated work force. Try convincing any tenth-grade English teacher of that as she desperately tries to coax a student into staying in school (so he can get a job upon graduation) as the local industry packs its bags and moves to Mexico, South Korea, or the Caribbean. One doubts that such moves are in search of more high school graduates to staff the shop floor.

Were these reform reports merely cases of poor arithmetic they could be easily dismissed. However, their strident tone and well-financed public reception, along with the simplistic answers they offer, have generated a great number of attempts at reforming the schools. Parents, often justifiably concerned about the quality of their children's education, find just enough truth in these reports to ignore much of what is wrong with them and call for some action on their recommendations. State legislatures, which hold the ultimate responsibility for public schools, have rushed to mandate these recommendations.

What is interesting is how mundane most of these recommendations are. The much touted *Nation At Risk* agenda can be boiled down to one word: More. The list is simple:

- We recommend that state and local high school graduation requirements be strengthened and that, *at a minimum, all* students seeking a diploma be required to lay the foundations in the Five New Basics by taking the following curriculum during their four years of high school: (a) 4 years of English; (b) 3 years of mathematics; (c) 3 years of science; (d) 3 years of social studies; and (e) one-half year of computer science.
- We recommend that schools, colleges, and universities adopt more vigorous and measurable standards, and higher expectations, for academic performance and student conduct, and that 4-year colleges and universities raise their requirements for admissions.

- We recommend that significantly more time be devoted to learning the New Basics. This will require more effective use of the existing school day, a longer school day, or a lengthened school year.[11]

And the list does not vary much from report to report. Virtually all recite the same litany of more hours on a subject, more time with homework, and more tests to measure students' progress. The recommendations are meant to apply to all children, kindergarten through twelfth grade.

Simplistic as they sound, these reforms, when transformed into legislative mandates, threaten to straightjacket many good teachers. State after state has generated a list of curricular objectives and standardized tests to measure student achievement. Georgia has gone so far as to specify objectives for all students in all subjects, the methods of teacher evaluation, and a standardized testing sequence all the way down to kindergarten. In Ohio schoolteachers are confronted with over 230 "pupil performance objectives" in the area of reading alone, and not one of them mentions that children might learn to love books. State after state has joined the parade of mandates and tests. What the 1970s and 1980s witnessed was a campaign of "legislated excellence" in schools.

The consequence of this campaign will be to swallow up the school day with "drill and kill" exercises designed to prepare students for the onslaught of tests. Already teachers are reporting that the state-mandated curriculum requirements make projects that go beyond the textbooks more difficult. In fact, anything that does not come directly from a textbook, or appear on the state-mandated tests, is actively discouraged. As one teacher put it:

> *The tests the students have to take are geared to the textbooks, the textbooks are boring, below the kids' abilities, and geared to workbook sheets and dittos. My administrator wants high test scores because they make the school—him, really—look good. Any space I can find to really get kids involved in class, to really cut loose on a project, shrinks almost every day. And I have to fight for every minute of it.*[12]

Another teacher who has begun to successfully engage her students in a class writing project that not only teaches them the mechanics of writing but also has them publishing a school literary journal is thwarted in developing her project:

> *As part of the recent educational reforms in my county, every single school in the county teaches the same basic curriculum. Everybody is basically doing the same thing at the same time in the same way. And since no one else has an English class producing a journal, that means we can't either.*

As a high school teacher who wanted to use a field trip to get her students a more real experience with the history lesson explained:

> *We're not allowed field trips anymore. The state requires so many minutes in each subject for each students. Since a field trip would spill over from my history class into the time currently scheduled for other areas, they just don't allow them.*

These frustrations, faced by good teachers everywhere, are the direct result of the current "legislated excellence" school reform movement.

Why is this happening? Why do we rush to impose from the statehouses uniform solutions to nonuniform schoolhouses? Why do we put some of the best teachers and schools at risk, take away from students some of the most exciting school experiences they will have, and spend millions on testing programs (money desperately needed by so many schools) that will do little, if anything, to improve public education?

We have been preoccupied with school pathology. Reports of bad schools, schools that fail, schools that seems utterly hopeless dominate the news. William Bennett, Secretary of Education in the Reagan administration, is responsible more than any other individual for this preoccupation. He used his position to loudly criticize American teachers and schools in general and attack in particular the Chicago public schools, which he deemed "the worst in the nation." Bennett has often been applauded as bringing much-needed attention to the ills of schools, but it is a hollow victory. Such attention has, for over five years, done little to improve the quality of the daily lives of children in schools. What such attention has done is to demoralize teachers and mislead the American public into believing the majority of schools are similarly sick.

Most American schools are, in fact, simply average. And most Americans, according to Gallup Poll results, are generally satisfied with their neighborhood school. In the vast majority of schools, children are safe and a curriculum that looks like the reforms cited above is in place. In fact, to implement most of the changes the reports call for would change the school experience only by degree, if at all, for the majority of American students. They might find themselves complaining about a longer school year or day, they might be taking home more homework, and they definitely would be taking more standardized tests, but they would not find their daily tasks any less routine and tedious or more educational.

This does not mean that average schooling is good enough. It means that reforms that focus on teaching for tests and memorization rather than application and imagination, on coverage of content rather than commitment to learning, on skills rather than wisdom will not change what is currently going on in schools. Of course schools should be better. But by concentrating on the weakest of schools, we generate reforms that at best apply to only a narrow band of schools and at worst destroy or hamper the excellent work being done by many teachers. We seem to want to learn only from sick schools, not from the healthy ones that could be models for emulation.

Aside from overemphasizing what is wrong with schools, the current "legislated excellence" movement also overemphasizes the vocational aspect of public schooling. With schooling for work as the only agenda, the push is on for better-trained workers. Harold Howe, a former U.S. Commissioner of Education, has summarized this trend this way:

> *[Economic advancement] is the engine that is driving the present school reform movement. It demands that schools produce excellence among the children of the poor for the sake of the nation's economic health. It wastes little time with concepts of equity or of our nation's need for independent-minded citizens to make a democracy and a complex society workable. Lip*

> *service is paid to these latter concepts, but after appropriate rhetoric has been supplied, school reform is back to the serious business of rescuing our corporations from Japanese competition.*[13]

We forget that this is not the reason public schools were founded. The foremost early advocate of free, public education, Thomas Jefferson, argued simply that public education made democratic government possible. Democracy, said Jefferson in 1782, could not survive without "those talents which nature has sown as liberally among the poor as well as the rich, but which perish without use, if not sought for and cultivated." He added:

> *Every government degenerates when trusted to the rulers of the people alone. The people themselves therefore are its only safe depositories. And to render even them safe, their minds must be improved to a certain degree. This indeed is not all that is necessary, though it be essentially necessary.*[14]

Education was to be the tool that made self-government possible. It was to develop in all citizens the characteristics, skills, wisdom, and virtues necessary to live in common. Thus, intoned the Massachusetts Constitution of 1780, as "wisdom and knowledge, as well as virtue, [are] diffused generally among the body of the people, being necessary for the preservation of their rights and liberties [it is necessary for the government to spread] the opportunities and advantages of education in the various parts of the country, and among different orders of people." Promoting democracy as a way of life was the original rationale for public education.

Even though it has often been overshadowed by calls for schools to focus primarily on preparing workers, the civic mission of public schooling has continually inspired and guided the work of many educators. Throughout the early part of this century, "progressive" educators worked against the drive to turn schools into factories. Instead, they argued for and developed schools that, in the words of the educator John Dewey, are "small and embryonic societies." In these communities students were to learn academics through real-life experiences, working as a group to solve problems or complete projects. The key notion was that we learn through experience. Thus, if we want children to learn how to function democratically they must experience, in school, a democratic setting.

Unfortunately, the progressives were unable to stave off the push for industrial-life efficiency during the formative years of mass public education. The experience of schooling was to become similar to the experience of factory life: large groups of students instructed as a mass, bells ringing to signify mass movement of individuals throughout the building, standardized measures used to judge each child, a hierarchical chain of command and authority, and standardized textbooks that amount to nothing more than the blandest possible recounting of names, dates, facts, and rules. Such an experience makes sense if the agenda of the school is solely to prepare and train industrial workers. The skills necessary to life on the shop floor—taking orders, enduring endless repetitions of the same tasks, and moving lockstep with one's compatriots through the routines of the day—are easily inculcated in such a setting. The skills for democratic life are not.

What does democratic life require of us? What of those things can we effect in the schools? Fundamentally, democracy requires citizens who participate broadly in informed public decision making with an eye toward the common good. Citizens must thus be literate, able not only to master the rudiments of reading, writing, and computing but also to use these tools as ways of understanding the world and making their voices heard in it. We must know how to find and evaluate information and also how to sift through the items that bombard us daily, sorting the useful from the superfluous, the clearly propagandistic from the approximate truths. Members of the republic must also have an ongoing sense of community and of obligation to the common good. Citizens see themselves as members of a community that makes their individuality, their uniqueness, possible, and they value and nurture that community. Democracy also requires that we each have courage, that we believe our actions are important and valued, and that we have not only a right, but also an obligation to participate publicly. The democratic citizen is, then, an individual with the intellectual skills and courage necessary to participate publicly in ways that will promote the common good.

Many commentators lament the loss of such citizens. We have become fragmented into mutually exclusive and warring interest groups, groups that we quickly abandon as the issues change or as our perceived self-interests relocate. In all this there seems to be no community interest, no public voice that speaks with authority for the good of all. Such a condition results from numerous factors, not the least of which is the abandonment of politics by common citizens, leaving the experts in charge. But we do so at our peril. As Jefferson pointed out, when the governed abandon the public sphere and turn over governing to the politicians, the politicians will prey on the public for their own self-interest, utilizing apathy, mistrust, and fragmentation as their most valued tools.

This is precisely why recovering the democratic mission of the public education is so vital today. While the school is not the only place that democratic virtue should be nourished, education is one of the few experiences all Americans hold in common. As such, the school it should be the primary place where all citizens use and develop common sense, that is, the sense to live in common.

It is this task of public education, the education of democratic citizens, that is most at risk in our schools. Looking inside schools and not just at test scores, our best reporters on school life indicate that schools are not currently places where the characteristics of participatory democratic citizenship can be nourished. Traits such as a commitment to community and a desire to participate; values such as a sense of justice, equality, or liberty; skills such as interpretation, debate, and compromise; habits such as reflection, study, examination of multiple perspectives—these are the basics of democratic citizenship. These are the basics that make our fondest images of ourselves come to life. And these are the basics that are being shoved out of the classrooms and schoolhouses in this country to make room for state-mandated tests, worksheets, and objectives.

There *are* teachers, administrators, parents, and students engaged in educating for the basics of democratic citizenship. They work in the type of schools where learning is not just a spectator sport; they work in schools for democracy. They work in

spite of, and sometimes in open defiance of, the mandate-and- test reform agenda. And they are the types of teachers and schools that we should watch, listen to, and learn from if we want our just-average schools to become good ones.

An adapted excerpt from Schools That Work *by George Wood (E.P. Dutton, April 1992). Used by permission.*

NOTES

1. National Commission on Excellence in Education. 1983. *A Nation at Risk*. Washington, D.C.: Federal Government Printing Office, p. 5.
2. Twentieth Century Fund. 1983. *Making the Grade*. New York: Twentieth Century Fund, p. 3; National Science Foundation, 1983. *Educating America for the 21st Century*. Washington, D.C.: National Science Foundation, p. v.
3. Hyram Rickover. 1959. *Education and Freedom*. New York: E. P. Dutton, p. 223.
4. The Special Studies Project. 1958. *The Pursuit of Excellence and the Future of America*. New York: Doubleday, pp. 30-31; *U.S. Statues at Large*, 1958, vol. 72, Part 1, 85th Congress, p. 1582.
5. M. C. Wilson. May 1911. "Some Defects in Our Public School Sy[illegible]." *Education Review*: 238-39; Horace Mann. 1891. "Twelfth Annual Report to the Board of Education," in *Life and Works of Horace Mann*, vol. 4 (Boston: Lee and Shephard.) p. 251.
6. Education Commission of the State. 1983. *Action for Excellence*. Denver: Education Commission of the States, p. 32.
7. *Educating America for the 21st Century*, p. v.
8. *A Nation At Risk*, p. 7.
9. Cited in *Education Week*, October 4, 1989, p. 12.
10. Susan O'Hanion. January 1985. "Huffing and Puffing and Blowing the Schools Excellent." *Phi Delta Kappan* 66, no. 5: 316.
11. *A Nation at Risk*, pp. 24, 27, 29.
12. Quotes in the text, unless otherwise noted, come from interviews with the author.
13. Harold Howe. November 1987. "Remarks on Equity and Excellence in Education." *Harvard Educational Review*: 201.
14. Thomas Jefferson. 1975. *The Portable Thomas Jefferson*. Merrill Peterson, ed., New York: Viking, p. 538.

THE HANOVER HIGH SCHOOL COUNCIL

Marilyn Blight

The Communities

Hanover High School is located in Hanover, New Hampshire, just across the Connecticut River from Norwich, Vermont. The two towns are connected by the Ledyard Bridge, which is the most concrete connection between them. But there are other connections as well. Many of the fifteen hundred residents of the two towns work for either Dartmouth College or the Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center, the largest teaching and research hospital between Boston and Montreal. Moreover, the two towns together comprise the Dresden School District, the first interstate school district in the country.

To the casual observer, the Hanover-Norwich community appears overwhelmingly homogeneous—Anglo-Saxon, affluent, academic, politically liberal, sophisticated, privileged, and secure. Closer scrutiny reveals a somewhat more complex picture. Although a large majority of community members are affluent, well-educated academics and professionals, there is a small but significant portion of the community that enjoys neither advanced education nor affluence. These people, many of whom are employed in semiskilled and unskilled jobs at the college and hospital, are third- and fourth-generation residents who feel that the towns have been taken over by "outsiders." Their alienation and the animosity that grows out of it are sometimes reflected in criticism of the school district's programs and the size of its budget. Significantly, however, both communities remain committed to the Dresden School District, twenty-eight years after its formation. In her book *It's Different At Dartmouth*, Kemeny describes the effort required to form the district:

> *It was more difficult to organize this district than to work out a treaty with the Soviet Union. Both towns had to approve, as did both legislatures. The bill went to both houses of Congress and was signed by the president—one of the last bills ever signed by President Kennedy—in November of 1963.*

> *Finally the pact had to be tested in the Supreme Court of both states. The Social Security Administration was so confused by the new formation that it wouldn't accept social security taxes. It now treats the Dresden School District as the fifty-first state! (Kemeny, 1978, p. 68)*

The High School

In thinking about the unique structure of the district and about the imagination, determination, and hard work that went into its creation, I am struck by the fact that those same characteristics are reflected in the ethos of the high school as it has evolved over the past fifteen years. If there is one characteristic that identifies Hanover High School, it is its willingness to consider possible alternatives to standard bureaucratic structures and its determination to give birth to creative new structures. Just as the citizens of both communities were willing to go all the way to the Congress of the United States in order to create a school district that made sense to them, so, too, Hanover High School has been willing to raise difficult questions about institutional structures with the school board and the community and to develop workable alternatives. These experiments have often resulted in the elimination of institutional arrangements commonly thought to be essential to the operation of a public high school. Hanover High School has, for instance, no bells (for several years it did not even have working clocks); it has no homerooms, no study halls, no designated lunch hour, no hall passes, and no detention. Students have class time and "unscheduled" time. During their unscheduled time students typically get something to eat, go to the library or a subject area resource center, meet with a teacher, socialize with friends, or, with the exception of freshmen, leave the school campus altogether.

Although the atmosphere in the school is informal, it is not relaxed. The pace is almost universally brisk; there is an aura of determination, purposefulness, and speed surrounding the students and staff. There are few signs of vandalism and many signs of creative and effective use of space. None of this activity seems that unusual, but for the fact that some of these folks, students and staff, are calling each other by their first names. It is typical of the informality and mutual respect at this school that such forms of address are not atypical and that they reflect the generally positive, supportive, and close relationships between students and staff.

The Council: Authority and Structure

Hanover's most radical departure from the traditional is the high school governance system known as the Council. In operation since 1971, and authorized by school board policy since 1977, the Council is the decision-making body of the high school. Its membership includes five students from each class, four staff members, eight at-large members, chosen from either students or staff, and two Dresden School District community members, one of whom must be a parent. The Council, which meets once a week in open session, has "the authority to act on all matters at Hanover High School not controlled by school board policy, state policy, administrative regulations established by the Superintendent of Schools, and rules and regulations published in *THE STUDENT HANDBOOK* of Hanover High School." (The Hanover High School Hand-

book, 1991-95, p. 4). In addition, the Council, along with the administration, reviews and approves *The Student Handbook*.

The principal has the power to veto actions of the Council; however, what makes the Council's authority both unusual and legitimate is its power to override the principal's veto by a two-thirds vote of its members. The vote to override is then binding on administrative action. It is the override power of the Council, coupled with the fact that both it and the Council's overall jurisdictional authority are formalized as Dresden School District policy, that makes the decision-making power of the Council real. Hanover High School believes that the power vested in the Council, as a representative form of government, to make school policy decisions results in a school that operates on democratic rather than traditional autocratic principles. Hanover High School students have a real voice in decision making, a situation that is unusual in a public high school. The circumstances surrounding the inception of the Council in the early 1970s are likewise unusual.

How the Council Came to Be

Skip Bean, Hanover's associate principal for the past nineteen years, was part of the group of administrators and teachers who developed the idea of a democratic high school governance organization, which would become known as the Council. In his early fifties, Bean is a native of Hanover and a graduate of both Hanover High School and Dartmouth College. Clearly he is relaxed and comfortable in his role and delights in talking about the development of democratic governance at the high school.

As Bean tells it, the idea for the Council "emerged out of the ashes of the old Student Council which voted to abolish itself in June 1970."* Most faculty who were at the school at that time agree that the motion to abolish the student council grew out of the anger and frustration felt by students and adults alike in the aftermath of the U.S. invasion of Cambodia and the killings at Jackson State and Kent State. It was, as Bob Kenny describes it in his study of the Council, "a small protest that did not receive national attention, but it was a strong statement by the students of Hanover High School that things were badly in need of change" (Kenny, 1982, p. 9).

When Bean became Hanover's new associate principal the following school year, he was charged with the task of coming up with a solution to the problem of student government. Although he refuses to assign credit to any one individual for coming up with the idea of the Council, he does hasten to point out that the notion that students should become involved in school decision making came from adults. What is clear is that the concept of the Council was a collective effort that was, at least in part, the result of the presence at Hanover of a faculty and administrators who were passionately interested in alternatives to traditional education and who had the energy, intelligence, and confidence to challenge old assumptions of governance.

Shortly after Bean became the associate principal, another newcomer arrived at the high school. Robert McCarthy, an innovative and creative administrator willing to take risks, was named the new principal. When school opened in September 1971,

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*Unless otherwise noted, quoted material comes from interviews with the author.

McCarthy announced the formation of a new democratic governance system in which students and faculty would share decision-making power with the administration. In a speech to the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) in 1977, McCarthy explained the philosophical rationale upon which the model for democratic governance at Hanover was based. In that speech, McCarthy echoed the assumptions of political scientist and educator Willis Hawley and concluded:

> *Despite the obvious need for improvement in formal, political education programs, it seems probable that such reforms in themselves will have little impact on the way young people relate to the political system. The reason is that while students learn about government and politics through the formal curricula and what instructors teach, they also learn by observing and experiencing the extent to which the democratic values and processes are really adhered to in the life of the school as a social system. It seems likely that most students will take seriously the implicit admonition of most schools, "to do as we teach and not as we do." (McCarthy, 1977, unpaged)*

"In other words," McCarthy said, "the contribution that educators can make is to the training of citizens, to the development of a deep respect for the democratic values, and to the predisposition to see politics as an appropriate and useful vehicle for which one's interests can be advanced is related … to the way schools themselves are organized and how students are treated" (McCarthy, 1977, unpaged).

McCarthy and other adults at the high school had come to realize that it was almost impossible to teach democratic values effectively within an institution that was being run as a benevolent dictatorship. The school's new governance system needed to reflect the democratic values and processes of American government, it needed to be representative, it needed to provide balances of power between the executive branch (administration) and the legislative branch (students and staff), and it needed to provide a mechanism for appeals through a judiciary branch. A governance system such as this, democratic in both values and structure, would serve as a laboratory for teaching democratic values and processes. McCarthy said:

> *The two goals that we attempt to strive for in our citizenship education program, using the school as a laboratory, are, [first], encouraging a sense of collective responsibility on the part of our student body for the school and the development of skills of bargaining and analysis within this framework. … The second aspect of our student governance operation which we feel is important to the development of citizenship is to encourage adolescents to recognize the tension between the great tradition of individual liberties we have in this country and the need for a sense of collective responsibility to hold this society together. (McCarthy, 1977, unpaged)*

McCarthy reiterates a concern expressed by the psychologist Uri Bronfenbrenner. As McCarthy puts it: "We may well be educating generations of future citizens with little sense of community responsibility. The members of the Council at Hanover High School regularly get confronted by issues that require them to examine that responsibil-

ity" (McCarthy, 1977, unpaged).

A third individual whose efforts were central to the development of the Council during its first year was a man named Tom Hanlon. His ideas about democratic values and their relationship to education were important to the development of the Council. He devoted much of his time and considerable energy and wisdom to guiding, nurturing, and sustaining the infant organization in its first year. Although Hanlon died suddenly the following year, the lasting value of his contribution to Hanover High School is recognized in the awarding, each year on Class Day, of the Tom Hanlon Cup, which honors that member of the Hanover High School community, selected by the Council, who has done the most to further the spirit of the school as a community.

The Council in Action

The Council meets every Thursday morning during the school year. Meetings, which are open to all members of the school community, are run according to *Robert's Rules of Order* and are chaired by a moderator who is elected by the Council. The moderator is joined by an assistant moderator, a representative to the school board, a treasurer, and a secretary, all elected by the Council from its members. At a typical meeting the Council might consider a number of motions, either from individual members or from one of its committees, which include Administration, Curriculum, Student Activities, Student Life, Housekeeping, and Judiciary. The committee structure gives small groups the opportunity to focus on one area of school structure, to research an issue in that area, and to present their findings and recommendations in the form of motions for the Council's consideration and vote. Council members also bring to the group concerns that have been raised by their constituents. These concerns are then assigned to the appropriate committee for further study. Motions that the Council considers range from the simple to the complex. Simple "dailiness of student life" issues such as the quality of the toilet paper in the bathrooms are common and are handled quickly and efficiently. More complex motions take more time and are often developed in conjunction with other school committees. In recent years, for example, the Council has worked with the principal's advisory committee, the Committee on Instruction on the development of policies on cheating, attendance, and the use of alcohol and other drugs. These joint committees frequently include other students and staff as well as parents and community members. It is not unusual for them to meet on a regular basis over the course of a full school year before making their final policy recommendations. Council members quickly learn that much of the Council's real work is done not in the weekly meetings, but outside of and in preparation for the Council meeting itself.

The Judiciary Committee

The Judiciary Committee is perhaps the most important of the Council's committees. The Dresden School Board policy that established the Council as the governance body of the school states that the Judiciary Committee, commonly known as J-Comm, "is established to review the decisions of the administration in discipline cases when students believe they have been treated unfairly." Furthermore, "the Judiciary Committee's decisions on innocence are binding on the administration. If the Judiciary

Committee determines that a student is guilty, it may either affirm the administrative punishment or recommend a new punishment which the administration must consider prior to imposing a new punishment" (Dresden School Board Policy JHCB).

Associate Principal Skip Bean sees this avenue for student appeal of disciplinary decisions as an important safety valve on the pressure cooker of school life; students who feel they have been treated unfairly always have the option of appealing the administration's decision to J-Comm. In fact, Bean says that he reminds students of the J-Comm option before they leave his office following a disciplinary meeting, especially if he senses that the student is dissatisfied with the disciplinary decision that has been made. "J-Comm keeps me honest," Bean says. "I can't allow myself on a bad day to run roughshod over a kid if he can appeal [my decision] to J-Comm." Significantly, Bean views J-Comm not as a source of additional tension in his job, but as a help. "The fact that [J-Comm's] there makes you feel like you're part of the system ... like you're not working as much alone," he says. He cites as an example of J-Comm's value a disciplinary decision he made last year that was appealed. The appeal process, in which the committee took testimony from both the administration and the appellant, led to a recommendation from the committee that the punishment be changed, although the committee upheld the administration's finding of guilt on the part of the student. Bean says that, ironically, *he* considered the new punishment recommended by the J-Comm more harsh than what he had originally imposed.

What is most important is that J-Comm provides a mechanism for including additional insights into and perspectives on a disciplinary judgment. The value of the appeal process lies not in second guessing the administration, but in assisting it in assuring a widespread perception on the part of students that careful attention is paid to issues of fairness and justice in disciplinary cases. Given this, it is not surprising that Bean believes that his job as a disciplinarian is made considerably easier by the role that the Judiciary Committee of the Council plays in school discipline.

Although most students perceive J-Comm as a legitimate mechanism for appealing disciplinary decisions, not all students share that viewpoint. Skepticism seems to run particularly high among students who are not part of the affluent, academic mainstream of Hanover High School life. Many of these students hang out in a part of the school known as the Dresden room. Talking with them, I am struck by the sense of powerlessness and futility they feel in the face of administrative decision making. Although there seems to be a consensus among this group that students are generally treated fairly, when I mention J-Comm as an appeals option, Bill, who is a senior, says clearly, "No one ever tries that; I don't think anybody's ever gone to J-Comm." Even when someone else in the group mentions that there has been a J-Comm case recently, Bill is doubtful; he does not believe that a "bunch of kids" could have any power over the administration. Cheri, an especially articulate senior who appears to have friends outside the Dresden group as well and who may, therefore, have a somewhat broader perspective, says, "Your problem doesn't usually seem like it would be that big of a deal to them; it doesn't usually seem like it's that serious a problem." Lauren, also a senior, who is new to Hanover High School this year, suggests another possibility when she says, "[The administration] knows when it's serious, so they never go that far

[in their punishment]." Bill reiterates his belief, however, that the administration "would not let a student go to [J-Comm] with big problems ... the administration would listen to what J-Comm said and then [ignore it]." At this point, Cheri repeats her assertion that "Mr. Bean and Mr. Bagnato [the principal] are fair and they will listen." Lauren may be pinpointing a basic problem, especially for new students, when she says, "I don't know how many kids in the school know there is a J-Comm to go to ... I didn't." In spite of a published handbook and other efforts to inform students about school rules in general and J-Comm in particular, some students remain unreached and unaware.

These students' perspectives are not a new phenomenon at Hanover High School. Since the beginning, the Council has struggled, for the most part unsuccessfully, to find ways to help these students feel more a part of the Council and its governance of the school. It may not be overstating the case to suggest that the students mentioned above see themselves as so disenfranchised, so left out of the school as well as the larger community, that they already believe that justice and fairness are principles that do not apply to them. To create a sense of belonging and enfranchisement among these students, in the face of the economic and academic realities that isolate them, remains an enormous and as yet unmet challenge, not only for the Council, but for the school and the community as well.

The Loyal Opposition

Bill Murphy is the faculty member generally acknowledged as the leader of the "loyal opposition," that segment of the faculty that opposes the Council on both philosophical and procedural grounds. Murphy is, nevertheless, one of the most trusted members of the school community. Sincerity, integrity, and concern are the terms often used by both students and adults to describe him. Murphy believes in the traditional authority of adults in the school. They are, he suggests, the individuals most able to make judgments and decisions that are in the school's best interest. Murphy states his opposition in positive terms, emphasizing that he is not trying to destroy the Council but rather "to promote the position of the faculty within the school."

While it is unlikely that many teachers at Hanover would adhere to Murphy's philosophical stance about adult authority in the school, a significant minority do share his criticism of the procedural structure of Council governance. It is a longstanding criticism. "To a large extent," Murphy says, "the idea of the Council was imposed. We came back to school [in September 1971] and we found out that we were going to have a Council. I will admit," he continues, "the faculty bought it, but what we gave up was all of our traditional authority, and what we got in return was a minority voice on the Council." Murphy discounts the argument that faculty representatives to the Council wield far more power than their votes imply, by reason of their persuasive influence. "Weigh it any way you want on paper and it still comes out the same," he says. "In a decision-making situation at Hanover High School, the faculty assume a minority role, and I think that's inappropriate."

As an example of the faculty's interests being poorly served by the Council Murphy cites the "late papers" policy. This rule, written and approved by the Curriculum Committee of the Council and later endorsed by the principal's advisory group,

sets limits on the amount of time a teacher may take to grade and return students' papers. In addition, the policy provides students with a way to seek "redress" against teachers who do not pass papers back on time. Most importantly, the policy establishes an expectation on the part of the administration as well as the Council that teachers will meet the policy guidelines. It is in areas such as this, where the interests of faculty and students are in potential conflict and where Council decisions have a direct impact on teachers' professional lives, that tensions between faculty and the Council most often arise. And it is in these situations that the issues of decision-making power in the school—who has it and who should have it—receive the most serious attention and debate. These tensions are reflected in Murphy's comments on the late-papers policy; it is the only occasion on which I hear anger creep into his voice. He says, "I don't particularly cotton to some wet-eared sophomore saying, 'I'm going to take you to J-Comm because you didn't get my paper back [on time].'"

The Council has, over the past nineteen years, dealt successfully with many of the "dailiness of student life" issues that are of more concern to, and that have more impact on, students than faculty. As the Council comes of age and solidifies its legitimacy and institutional authority in the school, it has begun to tackle more substantive and complex issues, such as cheating and attendance, which have direct impact on faculty and administrators as well as students. One of the major challenges facing the Council as it begins its twentieth year is negotiating effectively at the intersection of student and faculty lives and interests. How successfully tensions which place stress on that intersection are resolved may determine the future effectiveness of the Council in sustaining a strong and united community at Hanover High School.

Council Members' Voices

Grant Jordan is a Hanover High School graduate who was the Council moderator during his senior year. For the three years prior to his election, Jordan worked extraordinarily hard to become the moderator. During the process he matured into an articulate public speaker, an able and tough negotiator, and an effective school leader. Midway through his senior year he talked with me about the Council. At that time he saw it from the inside and saw it not as an aberration, but as a thoroughly institutionalized aspect of the school. To him, much of the Council's work was essentially procedural; it is indicative of the Council's institutionalized strength that Jordan recognized that most of the job consisted of carrying out tasks that were outlined in the bylaws of the organization. He knew that he was not, for the most part, charting new ground, and that the Council seemed pretty "cemented into the school." He was also politically astute enough, however, to recognize that a large part of what makes the Council's strength possible is that the administration is "very positive about it. More and more," Jordan commented, "Mr. Bagnato says, 'Let's see what the Council thinks' when he looks at school issues."

Although Jordan was generally well regarded by teachers in the school, he was involved in a serious infraction of school rules while he was moderator. I was reminded of Bob McCarthy's interest in teaching students to learn to distinguish between private rights and public responsibilities as I listened to Jordan talk about the incident.

He was very concerned about the faculty's reaction. Clearly, he was sorry to have "screwed up" personally, but it was the thought that, through his actions, he might have jeopardized the reputation of the Council that most concerned him. He recounted the lengthy lecture about his misbehavior that he received from a teacher, concluding that he became angry only when she questioned whether he had any respect for the school. He said to me, "I wanted to hit her. Obviously, I have respect, I've put so much into it. I go to other schools and see what they're like and I've got a load of respect for what's going on here." A minute or so later in our conversation, Jordan came back to this point in order to recognize that his anger was probably largely self-directed. He said, "Some faculty see what I did as not respecting the school [and] they're saying, 'If he doesn't respect it, who does?'" Jordan seemed to be saying that he forgot that he was a public person, and "if you're moderator, you can't forget that." For him, at least, the McCarthy lesson about the close connections between private life and public responsibility was learned in a meaningful and lasting way.

Another student, Nick Davidson, who was active on the Council for three years, found it to be a source of increasing frustration, especially as his own political sophistication grew. He described it this way:

> *Last year I felt very involved.... There were issues that lent themselves to that. This year, I feel that the things I'd like to get involved with—things like curriculum and getting rid of incompetent teachers—aren't things that kids are taken seriously about. I think we've been relegated to a back seat in that whole area and I think it's one of the most important areas, but I know that there are limits beyond which, reasonably, the Council can't go.*

In fact, the Council's bylaws specifically identify curriculum and teacher evaluation as two areas over which Council has no jurisdiction. Although the Council may make curriculum recommendations to the Committee on Instruction, it has no decision-making authority in this area. Davidson's frustration seems to add credence to the concerns expressed by some faculty that the Council wants to expand its influence directly into the classroom. Nonetheless, most Council members, although they share at least some of his frustration, also share his understanding of the limits on the Council's jurisdiction.

Most of the student members of the Council I spoke with expressed a fairly even mix of private and public benefits gained from their Council service. They talked about gaining personal skills in areas such as public speaking and the development of persuasive arguments; all of them also mentioned, quite unself-consciously, that being a Council member looks good on their school records and may help them to get accepted at competitive colleges. At the same time, most of them also talked about the importance of serving on the Council as a way to get opinions across, to share ideas, and to have an effective role in shaping school policy. All of them also believe that the Council's power is real and that it plays a vital role in shaping the culture of the school, a culture that values individuals' rights and responsibilities as well as their active participation in shaping the collective life of the school.

Most Council members, however, also spoke of the need to increase interest and

participation in school governance among the school as a whole. Lauren Jameson, a particularly poised and articulate junior, said:

> *We need to increase awareness and communication. I think a lot of the issues that are brought up in Council are very important, and I don't think students are sufficiently aware when issues are coming up. When we were in danger of losing the Talent Show [an annual event sponsored by the Council] we had a Council meeting in the auditorium where kids could come in and watch and we got input from those people because they felt [having] the Talent Show was important.... I think a lot of students are really concerned as to how their lives are going to be affected by decisions made by the administration, and if the issues were sufficiently advertised, then I think those students would come to meetings more often. For faculty who haven't been on Council I wonder how much they know about it, and I would encourage all of them to be more interested.*

Jameson followed this comment with a long list of practical suggestions and more general ideas about ways to communicate issues and generate interest. Not surprisingly, when I asked students who were not Council members what the Council had accomplished that year, every one of them pointed to the fact that the Council was responsible for getting the Talent Show reinstated.

The Future of the Council

As it begins its twentieth year, the Council can congratulate itself on an extraordinary achievement. With the assistance, support, and trust of teachers, administrators, and school boards, without whom it would not have been possible, it has created a high school in which students' lives are subjected to few of the arbitrary rules and injustices so typical of most American public high schools. This is a school that not only says it treats students fairly, but also institutionalizes guarantees of fairness. This is a school that has created a governance structure that encourages students to feel empowered to take charge of their own lives individually and to take part in shaping the collective life of the school. And this is a school that uses the governance structure as a laboratory for teaching and learning about democracy.

The Council also faces several challenges. One is that when life is as good as it is at Hanover High School, it is difficult to sustain most students' interest and involvement in the governance process. Furthermore, a small but significant minority of students do not feel empowered or enfranchised; the Council needs to continue to seek ways to reach those students and to make them part of the school community. Another important challenge facing the Council is that many of the problems remaining to be solved are located in that tension-filled intersection where faculty and student interests collide. While the school as a whole may operate on democratic principles, there are as yet no formal democratic structures in place within classrooms. The true test of the Council's effectiveness may come in the skill with which the various constituencies negotiate this difficult terrain.

Significantly, it seems to me, most questions about the Council focus on revising,

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expanding, and improving its role in the school. In spite of the challenges, few members of the Hanover High School community appear to be interested in considering the school without the Council as an integral part. There is an assurance and optimism about the Council that is pervasive in this school, despite concerns over turf issues and student body disinterest. When someone asked Ford Dale, a teacher who worked with the Council for ten years, what the hardest thing about establishing democratic governance in a school was, he said: "Getting people to believe it will work is the hardest part. Once they believe, the rest is easy."

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DEMOCRACY IN A CHANGING SOCIETY

WHOSE CURRICULUM?: CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND OUR SCHOOLS

Laurie Olsen

Once upon a time in a society far, far away, something was terribly wrong. The children had stopped learning. In despair over the future of their children, the elders from all corners of the island, representing many different groups that had often been in conflict, came together at the Great Hall.

The elders agreed that the root of the problem was that the children did not know who they were, did not know their history, but when the elders tried to decide what should be done, groups faced each other with fear, anger, and passion.

On one side of the room three voices rang out. An elder from the hills cried out: "Yes, it is true! Our children do not know their history, because those who have been in the Great Hall have kept the truth from them." A second voice joined him, saying, "Those who own the schools have told the history of the Great Hall only, and our children's own cultures have been invisible." And a third elder added: "Your culture is not the same as ours. We want our children to learn the beauty of the hills, the richness of life on the far side of the island, and the full story of how the Great Hall has tried to destroy us."

Those who call themselves the Keepers of the Past yelled back: "There have been omissions. Our children must know that not all of our culture has been created here within the Great Hall. We will tell of how the peoples living outside the hall have contributed to our life here." And another added, "We must emphasize what a great and mighty culture we have created together."

"No!" From across the hall the voices got louder. "It is not right to include just the contributions of a few; we need all of our histories to be told."

From one side: "You are tribalists! Separatists! Your way of telling the story will tear us apart as a society!"

And from the other side: "You are racists! Your way of telling the story dooms our children and our peoples to invisibility. It is a partial truth, a distortion, a lie!"

Outside the Great Hall, the children were gathered. Scared and confused by the loud angry voices of their elders, they stood in small clusters whispering, "What is going on?" "Why are they so angry?"

An old woman stood nearby listening to the rumble from within the Great Hall. She had a smile on her face, and the children thought perhaps she might be crazy. Finally one of the children called out: "Old Woman, tell us what is going on? And why are you smiling?"

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The wise woman pulled the children around her, fingering lovingly with one hand the silky hair of a child from the far end of the island and with the other the thick full curls of a child from the hills.

"Ours is a culture with a long history of struggle and conflict about who we are and what holds us together as a people," she said. "There have been terrible wrongs committed in the process, but there is also a long history of insisting that those wrongs be made right. This great debate has deep and tremendous importance, for it is the conflict itself that knits us together. If the debate were to stop, we would die.

"Someday, my children, you too will need to take your place in this oh-so-important debate. You will need to insist that the story of your people be told in its fullness, and be committed to hearing the full story of others."

"Ahhh!" said the children in chorus. "So that is our past, and that is our future." And knowing this, they returned to their play.

The Debate

A profound but deeply polarized debate over what children should be taught and over whose voices will be represented in the curriculum has erupted in California over the selection of state- approved social studies textbooks. This latest chapter over whose history will be taught is a major new event in our nation's continuing struggle to define the nature of our democracy and to reconcile the tensions between *pluribus* and *unum—many* and *one*. In this struggle, diversity has been posed as antithetical to unity, multicultural as oppositional to the existence of a common culture.

This is not just an argument over books. It is fundamentally a struggle over inclusion and exclusion, over power and knowledge, and over inequities in society. Underlying this debate is the recognition that textbooks carry the official stamp of what is considered legitimate knowledge. The arguments over the textbooks have become a forum for cultural politics—a red flag for the much larger issues of the politics of culture and of national identity that have been smoldering for years. This debate is fundamentally about the role of schools, about control over which knowledge will be taught, and about very differing notions of our society.

In the fall of 1990 the California State Curriculum Commission adopted a new social studies textbook series for the upper elementary school grades. The books, which portray a history of America built by diverse peoples but based on the values of Europe, were welcomed by a majority of the commission as the most balanced and unbiased texts available to date. However, during months of public hearings and private commission meetings prior to the adoption, legions had protested the books on the grounds that they skewed and marginalized the histories of many of California's ethnic and cultural communities.

Few educational issues have galvanized Californians as much as the process that led to the selection of these textbooks. Their authors and proponents, many of whom are education leaders in California, call themselves "pluralists" and say they applaud multiculturalism, but not at the expense of a common culture. This group sees "too much" focus on diversity as a barrier to national unity. The magnitude of this sentiment nationally was reflected in *Time* magazine's cover story on July 8, 1991, which blasted multicultural education efforts around the country. The cover headline was "Who Are

We? American Kids Are Getting a New—and Divisive—View of Thomas Jefferson, Thanksgiving, and the Fourth of July."

The large, loose coalition of civil rights and community groups that oppose the California textbooks call the pluralist version of a unified America evolved through assimilation and integration a "myth." They cite the inequalities and segregation prevalent in society today as resounding proof and demand that their children know the story of how these came to be. They further state that only when children know one another's full heritage and history can their self-esteem thrive and their chances of working together as equals improve. We will call those who oppose the textbooks "inclusionists," as their mission is to see their diverse experiences and perspectives included in the core curriculum of the schools. Most basically, they call upon schools to teach the whole and full truth.

The Context: Demographic Change and the Resulting Cultural Politics

The word "nation" comes from the Latin word for "birth" and implies a group composed of people of common ancestry. But Americans do not share a common ancestry or religion. The United States has been, since its inception, a culturally diverse nation. The tension involved in knitting a nation out of diverse peoples has been a recurring theme throughout our nation's history—and never so profoundly as during peak eras of immigration.

This is, of course, such an era. The swiftness of demographic changes has thrown our society into a deep identity crisis. Fear, anger, anxiety, and confusion enter all the public discussions about diversity. What do we have in common? What will hold us together as a society? Can we unite as a nation without ignoring the historical struggles and unresolved injustices among our people? What will be the terms of the compact?

In record numbers, people are immigrating to California. They come from every continent, speak close to a hundred different languages, and represent hundreds of national and cultural groups. The 1990 census counted six million foreign-born residents in California. In the past decade, the number of children with limited English proficiency in California public schools has tripled.

It is not surprising that the tensions over how we define ourselves as a nation are centering on what is to be taught in the schools. Schools are the formalized institution of cultural transmission. The school curriculum has long been used to shape the minds and values of the next generation. Curriculum is not neutral, nor is knowledge. But what or whose values should the public schools reflect? What is the role of schools in an era of diversity? Whose knowledge will be taught? And who has the right to determine what will be taught?

The history of American public schools has included many social and political clashes over these questions. What ends up taught in school is always the result of power struggles among various cultures, classes, races, genders, and religions and the clashes that arise from their wide-ranging perspectives among group members. At times of demographic turmoil, these kinds of conflicts most dramatically come to the fore, reflecting the broader tensions in a democratic society.

Social Studies Textbook Adoption in California

State law governs the purchase of textbooks in California. The first phase is the development of a curriculum framework by a committee of appointed "experts" in a subject. The framework describes what should be taught and how. A cornerstone of the school reform strategy of State Superintendent of Instruction Bill Honig has been massive revisions of the curriculum frameworks, accompanied by upgrading instructional materials and developing accountability measures aligned with the frameworks. Many aspects of these reforms have been widely lauded in national education circles. But the long process of developing the new social studies framework was not itself without controversy.

The new History Social Science Curriculum Framework states:

> *We want our children to recognize the multicultural character of American society and the existence and contributions of the many groups who comprise our society; to develop an awareness of how their lives will be affected by domestic and international politics, demographic shifts and the stress of social change; to learn that our national heritage is pluralistic; and that our national history is the complex story to many peoples in one nation, of 'E pluribus unum'. (California State Department of Education, 1988)*

The framework was viewed as a progressive and triumphant move toward excellence by some, as a compromise by others, and as a deep defeat by still others. But the full force of these differences did not fully explode as a public issue until the textbook adoption process began, as it highlighted differences among interpretations of the framework. Publishers were invited to submit books that met the mandates of the new social studies framework. Only two textbook series made it to the end of the reviewing process. During the required period of public comment, the books received support and criticism from hundreds of advocates, educators, parents, and academicians throughout the state. Many educators, delighted by the vast improvements in format and content over previous textbooks, voiced support. But others—primarily those representing numerous ethnic groups—spoke repeatedly against the portrayal of minorities.

The State Board of Education had the job of formally approving the books. Only one K-8 series, by Houghton Mifflin, was finally adopted by a unanimous vote. But the California State Curriculum Commission was split in its vote recommending the adoption. After the adoption, the fight moved to local school boards as they deliberated whether to buy the books, given that alternatives and the resources to buy them would be scarce.

During the heated debates before to the adoption, the most challenged aspect of the Houghton Mifflin books was their treatment of slavery. Following are two examples of controversial passages from the fifth-grade social studies textbook *America Will Be*:

> *Cotton growing seemed especially well suited for the institution of slavery because it kept the slaves busy the year round. Slave owners always feared that if their workers had little to do they would get into trouble!*

> *Harvesting was usually over by Christmas time. Then, for about a week, all work stopped . . . the harsh and cruel side of slavery was put aside, if not forgotten. There were feasts, singing and dancing, a Christmas tree . . . [and] small presents for everyone. Some masters even dressed up as Santa Claus and distributed gifts.*

Other complaints stated that native American peoples were treated in the books as warlike and politically scheming; that the harsh working and living conditions of Mexican farmworkers were washed over; that the imprisonment of Japanese Americans in the United States during World War II was trivialized; and that the scriptures of non-Christian religions were discounted as historically questionable.

Dissenting commission member Joyce King, director of teacher education at Santa Clara University, spent months trying to dissuade her colleagues from approving the books. In an article in the *California Journal*, King is quoted as saying, "I feel an ethical and moral responsibility to oppose the adoption of instructional materials which violate the dignity and worth of people in any way" (Waugh, 1991, p. 121). Public tempers flared when the education establishment defended the books at a press conference by citing the high number of references to "minorities." The conflict escalated further as parents and advocates spoke in opposition to the books at the review hearings. These opponents argued that context, perspective, and accuracy were at issue, not "minority quotas." The entire adoption process was further questioned because Gary Nash, one of the principal authors of the Houghton Mifflin text, was a UCLA colleague of Charlotte Crabtree, the chair of the commission's history subject area committee.

To understand this divisive debate, we must examine the positions held by the inclusionists and the pluralists.

The Pluralist Position

During the textbook debates, the pluralist position was firmly represented by a majority within the Commission on Textbook Selection, State Superintendent of Instruction Bill Honig, and the well-known Boston textbook publisher Houghton Mifflin. It was backed by prominent national educators such as Diane Ravitch (a principal author of the California social studies framework), and by historians Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., and Chester Finn, who call themselves "pluralist multiculturalists."

In the pluralists' view, the growing diversity of the population is weakening the glue that binds us together as a society. Pluralists are concerned with what they view as a cultural crisis. They believe that the role of teaching history is to specifically emphasize a core of values and experiences that defines what holds us together—an American culture to which we all belong. Curriculum becomes the key to creating this common culture. Highlighting differences will lead to cultural and societal dissolution, they say.

The most widely publicized supporter of this position is Diane Ravitch:

> *If there is no overall community, if all we have is a motley collection of racial and ethnic cultures, there will be no sense of the common good. Each*

group will fight for its particular interests, and we could easily disintegrate as a nation, becoming instead embroiled in the kinds of ethnic conflicts that often dominate the foreign news each night. (Ravitch, 1990, p. 19)

Ravitch rejects what she views as the position of the "particularistic multiculturalists":

Pluralists ... say that we are all part of this nation's gorgeous mosaic of racial and ethnic groups; as citizens of the same society, we are all responsible for one another. By contrast, the particularists neglect the bonds of mutuality that exist among people of different groups and encourage children to seek their primary identity in the cultures and homelands of their ancestry. (Ravitch, 1990, p. 18)

Central to understanding the pluralists' position is their view of the American past. They assert that American culture belongs to all of us because the United States was built by all of us. We remake our society and culture with each generation and, by definition, American culture is and always has been multicultural. While some brief mention may be made of the struggles between groups, the pluralists are emphatic that in teaching children history we must emphasize the ties that bind, and not the struggles that they fear will divide. As Ravitch says: "In elementary and secondary texts, the story must be told as the forging of a new people who are learning to live amicably with others who are different. It is a story in which people of many different backgrounds have joined together to become one nation, all Americans" (Ravitch, 1990, p. 18).

Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., a staunch pluralist whose views on the issue have been widely published, raised a dissenting voice in response to a New York state task force report, endorsed by the New York State Regents, which took a strong, controversial position in favor of a more inclusionist curriculum. In response he wrote:

The contemporary ideal is not assimilation but ethnicity. The escape from origins has given way to the search for roots. We used to say "E pluribus unum." Now we glorify pluribus and belittle unum. The melting pot yields to the Tower of Babel.... If we repudiate the quite marvelous inheritance that history has bestowed on us, we invite the fragmentation of our own culture into a quarrelsome spatter of enclaves, ghettos and tribes. The bonds of cohesion in our society are sufficiently fragile, or so it seems to me, that it makes no sense to strain them by encouraging and exalting cultural and linguistic apartheid. The rejection of the melting pot points the republic in the direction of incoherence and chaos." (Schlesinger, 1990, p. A14)

The pluralists repeatedly pose versions of the question "How can we ensure that education promotes pluralism and not particularism?" The most essential public good at this time in history, according to the pluralists, is a sense of racial and ethnic unity. The article in *Time* reported:

It is not fairly commonplace to learn American history in the context of who has oppressed, excluded or otherwise mistreated whom.... The customs, beliefs and principles that have unified the U.S., however imperfectly, for

> *more than two centuries are being challenged with a ferocity not seen since the Civil War.... Do Americans still have faith in the vision of their country as a cradle of individual rights and liberties, or must they relinquish the teaching of some of these freedoms to further the goals of ethnic and social groups to which they belong?" (Gray, 1991, p. 13)*

In the textbook adoption process the pluralists sought to acknowledge the contributions of selected racial and ethnic groups to a common culture, but within an existing and overarching framework of an American society born from selected values of Europe. The contributions of these groups become important as illustrations of the themes of democracy, of individual rights, of industrial progress; but including more details or additional groups would be unwieldy and unnecessary. As Gary Nash, one of the authors of the Houghton Mifflin series selected for adoption, explained, "Students would need to replace their bookbags with wheelbarrows" (Trombley, 1990, p. 1).

According to the pluralists, the greatest threat to national unity are those who emphasize the differences between groups, who call attention to past injuries and struggles between groups in society, who reject a common culture. They are, in the words of the pluralists, "particularists," "separatists," "filiopietists" (those with excessive reverence for their ancestors), "Europhobes," and "tribalists."

The Inclusionist Position

In contrast to the litany of names leveled at them by the pluralists, the voices calling for rejection of the textbooks simply call themselves "civil rights advocates" or say they are "with the people." In the San Francisco Bay Area, for example, they include the NAACP, the National Chicano Human Rights Commission, the Coalition Against Apartheid and Racism, the National Coalition of Educational Activists, Chinese Americans for Affirmative Action, the Arab Resource Center, and the San Francisco State University Women's Studies Department and School of Ethnic Studies.

The inclusionists refer to the pluralists as "education traditionalists" or "racists":

> *In California a powerful group of education traditionalists, with links in the Bush and Reagan administrations, has successfully promoted a blend of pluralism and nationalism that forms the basis of California's new history curriculum. It is rooted in the contention that there is a "common culture" to which all American immigrants have contributed—and which is the glue that keeps the nation together. This common culture, according to Diane Ravitch, was formed by different ethnic groups who "competed, fought, suffered, but ultimately learned to live together in peace and even achieved a sense of common nationhood." (Waugh, 1990, p. 1)*

The inclusionists say the textbooks continue the pervasive and longstanding pattern of omitting or marginalizing the experiences and heritage of the majority of people. They say their stories are excluded, their ethnic, racial, gender, class, and cultural identities denied, and their children taught a distorted and narrow view of American culture that perpetuates their oppression. As Henry Der, executive director of Chinese Americans for Affirmative Action, said in testimony before the Curriculum Commission on

September 13, 1990: "We do not want ethnic history, we want accurate history for all children of all races. We do not want to be marginalized any longer."

From the inclusionists' perspective, it is an ironic twist of rhetoric and a disturbing commentary on the polarized political climate that they are viewed as special interests and their call for inclusion as separatist. The common culture they strive for is based on acknowledgment of everyone's experiences. They assert that segregation, inequity, and "apartheid" are not, as Schlesinger charged, created by ethnic recognition, but by powerful forces of exclusion. In the debate about the nature of American history, the inclusionists view culture as rooted in the historical, economic, and political experiences of diverse peoples, defined in great measure around race, gender, class, and ethnicity. Access to one's culture requires knowledge about one's roots. The formal school curriculum either provides this, misrepresents it, or denies that it exists. For the inclusionists, the outcome of the curriculum battle will determine whether children are prevented by distortions and omissions from knowing their own history or affirmed by knowledge and recognition of their cultures and backgrounds, whether they are excluded from society or thrive as full members of it. Furthermore, in the inclusionist view, access to the perspectives and experiences of diverse groups provides all children with richer exposure to the breadth of human experience and paints a fuller picture of history.

Many inclusionists reject outright the pluralist view of a common unifying culture to which diverse peoples have voluntarily assimilated and contributed. They believe the assimilation and integration portrayed in that view is a distortion of the truth, particularly for African Americans and native Americans, and that the United States has failed to produce a pluralist society of ethnic, class, and cultural equals. The ideal of an American common culture of equality and democracy, they state, has not yet, in fact, been realized for America's ethnic and racial minorities. The culture of the United States has often instead supported a racist political and economic hierarchy.

Pedro Noguera, a professor at the University of California, Berkeley, and member of the Berkeley school board, which adopted the texts against his dissent, addressed this issue:

> *If we are to get to a point where as a society we can learn to respect each other, it has to be based upon open recognition of past injustice—that slavery was wrong, the genocide of the Indians was wrong. That clarity is essential to assure ethnic minorities that those kinds of activities won't occur again. That the books failed to do that is a reflection, really, of an ongoing debate within the country over whether or not, in fact, slavery was wrong. There are many historians and others who still believe that the ends justify the means. That maybe on some abstract moral grounds it was wrong to have carried out slavery or murdered Indians, but the result was that we have this great country. The implication is that slavery was a necessary part of building our greatness, and that slavery actually helped Black people, that it brought them "civilization." (Olsen, unpublished interview, April 11, 1991)*

Meanwhile, the inclusionists claim that steeping children from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds in the mythology of a common culture has meant the loss of cultural identity. In a sense, obscuring their true history and roots has made children cultureless. And denying them the experiences of other politically powerless groups has left them isolated. To many inclusionists, the traditional and pluralist conceptions of American culture merely impose someone else's culture (dominant European) on culturally diverse peoples.

For them, rejecting the state-adopted textbooks is an assertion of civil rights, a call for full recognition and inclusion and for a redefinition of "common" culture as a commonality based on acknowledgment, justice, and equity.

In response to charges that an emphasis on diversity will result in cultural dissolution, the inclusionists point to the societal dissolution that is already a reality in American life. The low self-esteem and achievement of children who do not see themselves reflected in the history taught in school is one example. Inclusionists demand reinforcement from the schools of those cultures that have been squashed by a dominant culture and political system. Parent June Hunt appeared before a joint hearing of the Berkeley and Oakland school boards to express her opposition to the textbooks:

> *I've always kept a very close eye on my son's education. I've watched the books that he's brought home and I haven't liked what I've seen. When the opportunity came to get better books, I was determined to see that the new books were better. As the mother of an African American child, I feel it's very important for my child to know about his history, to understand that Africans had a rich and wonderful history before they came to the Americas, and a rich and wonderful history after that, in spite of slavery. He needs a book that he can read and recognize himself in. He needs to see that he is part of history. (Hagar, 1991, p. 32)*

Inclusionists want a history curriculum that acknowledges past harms, that fully credits the contributions of all peoples, and that actually describes their experiences. Their mission is community and cultural survival, recognition, and full inclusion. Thus, they do not share the pluralists' concern about unity as a goal in and of itself. They ask instead, "What will be the basis of that unity? What will be the price for us, the minority ethnic and racial communities of California? What is a vision of unity that we can embrace without denying our own culture and experiences?"

The Subtext of Fear

The two major sides of the debate over cultural diversity in California's textbooks share a deep fear of societal and cultural dissolution, of increased racial intolerance and hostility. They agree on the power of formal curricula to shape and transmit culture and on the political ramifications of what is officially sanctioned knowledge. But they face each other across deep divides of race, ethnicity, and political viewpoint.

Indeed, can there be a consensus on what we want children to learn in school? Most of the national debates about schooling focus on whether or not there should be

a national curriculum. Should there be locally determined and chosen curriculum? Should parents be able to choose the kind of schooling and curriculum they want for their children, or will that erode the public right to determine education for a common welfare? Even if we sought a strong national common school, could there ever be agreement in a society as diverse as ours?

The history curriculum is particularly central in textbook battles, because history is the official line about who we are as a people. Our curriculum could and should play a role in shaping a new cultural reality—a new American cultural paradigm, inclusive of diversity and owning fully the histories of all our peoples.

Many teachers, striving to create a curriculum appropriate to the cultural and ethnic diversity of the students in their classrooms, are finding textbooks too limiting. In California Tomorrow's "Embracing Diversity" report, teachers selected for their effectiveness in educating diverse groups of students reported unanimously that teaching inclusively necessarily entails not relying on textbooks but using instead a broad array of supplementary materials that bring in the cultural and national backgrounds of the students and that assure the multiple perspectives and critical thinking that are central to learning in a diverse society.

The pluralists won the state-level textbook adoption round. But the scars are yet to be measured. And the debate itself is continuing at many different levels of the school system—in districts facing the decision to purchase the new texts and in classrooms as individual teachers seek ways to create curricula appropriate to their diverse students. Districts that have opted to reject the Houghton Mifflin texts, such as Oakland, Hayward, and East Palo Alto, are now working with historians, parents, and community groups to create history materials for the children in their classrooms. The process of creating these materials has forged democracies in action, as it has made communities confront head-on the problem of what constitutes inclusive history that rings true to the multiple cultures within them.

Hidden Curriculum Yet to Be Addressed

The dialogue over curriculum is important, but it overemphasizes the formal curriculum, as opposed to the hidden curriculum of structural elements that deny access to the basic skills of learning. These include schooling practices such as tracking; low teacher expectations for culturally and linguistically different students; and the fact that most of these children attend schools with teachers who are not as well trained, worse facilities, and fewer materials than their counterparts in middle-class and affluent communities. Judging from emotional public comments in hearings about textbook adoption, much of the anger and fear underlying the opposition to the new textbooks seems rooted in these larger patterns of inequality.

Furthermore, cultural politics and struggles over cultural diversity do not occur only in the shaping of the formal curriculum and textbook adoption. They occur as well at the classroom and individual level. The textbook does not define wholly what is taught. Teachers shape and reshape what they are willing to teach, what they want to teach. They present material in their own way and scramble for supplementary materials to round out what the texts offer. In so doing, they participate in defining

whose history will be taught. Therefore, teacher preparation, planning time, and the availability of supplementary materials becomes crucial. What teachers teach is then offered to students who listen or not, who accept or reject what they hear in school. Their parents may comment on what children repeat from their school lessons, helping children develop political and cultural lenses to mediate school learning. On all these levels, the acceptance or rejection of the official version of knowledge occurs.

Finally, the textbook battle is but one round in the "cultural diversity" debate and the struggles for a democratic society. For the past decade, bilingual and non-English-speaking communities have struggled with the dominance of the English language and the loss of their native tongues. Their concern over what is occurring in schools has focused less on the content of the curriculum than on the language in which it is taught. In many ways, this fight mirrors the debate over cultural diversity in the curriculum. The "English Only" advocates (similar to the pluralists in the curriculum debate) view native language rights as detrimental to the unity of our nation. In their eyes, the role of the schools is to ensure a common tongue—English—and, therefore, public funds should not be used for native language instruction or development. Here, too, unity is posed as threatened by diversity, and commonality as possible only through conformity.

In both the fight over the curriculum and the fight over language, the traditional educational policies of cultural and language assimilation are being forced to accede to the demands for greater incorporation and inclusion. Polarized debates over these issues illustrate the urgent need to develop a new, strong, American cultural paradigm that sees unity as strengthened by diversity and inclusiveness. We already have the political paradigm—it is called democracy. And in the political arena, as in the cultural arena, the tensions in our society between conformity and diversity demand vigorous attention.

The critical challenge we face today is to refuse to accept the idea that commonality can be achieved only at the expense of diversity, that unity exists only if we demand conformity. And this is the macro-challenge facing schools in an era of diversity. We need to find new terms of unity that equitably meet the needs of all students. We must gain courage in our demands for full inclusion, swallow our fears of diversity, and wade deep into the waters of this debate to discover and create the terms of mutuality and respect that can bind us together.

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SOCIAL JUSTICE IN A QUAKER SCHOOL: A PROCESS OF MULTICULTURAL CHANGE

Carolyn R. O'Grady

Introduction

This article describes a qualitative case study that examined the process through which one Quaker elementary school, Brinton Friends School (BFS), is becoming a multicultural, antiracist institution.[1] The study, conducted over four months in 1990, utilized in-depth interviewing, document analysis, and on-site observations. The purpose of the research was to explore how a school founded on spiritual principles integrates a process of multicultural change. Three aspects of the school's efforts were investigated:

1. the actual process the school is going through to achieve its goals
2. the way the teachers feel about this process
3. how multicultural principles are being integrated with the Quaker values of the school

This article will provide a brief overview of some research highlights for each of these areas.[2]

Background to the Study

This research is an outgrowth of my interest in how spirituality is integrated with antioppression social-change efforts. The attempt to integrate issues of spirituality with issues of diversity and social justice in education and society has gained momentum in the last several years.[3] It was my theory at the outset of this research that a strong foundation in spiritual principles can enhance a commitment to social justice. Quakers have long had a history of social activism that arises from a spiritual commitment, and they may have insights to offer about this synthesis.

My choice of multicultural education as one form of antioppression social change stems from the work of, among others, Montero-Sieburth (1988), Suzuki (1984), and Sleeter and Grant (1987).[4] Sleeter and Grant's "social reconstructionist" description

of multicultural education provided a framework for analyzing the goals and achievements of Brinton Friends School. They define social reconstructionist multicultural education as "an approach to education that prepares young people to take social action against social structural inequality" (Sleeter and Grant, 1987, pp. 434-35). Multicultural education from this perspective can enable students of all ages to examine themselves and the world around them with more understanding. It develops the ability to transform oppressive situations through action (Montero-Sieburth, 1988). The social reconstructionist definition is particularly appropriate for this research given the Quaker philosophy guiding Brinton Friends School, since the Society of Friends throughout its history has been noted for a strong commitment to issues of social justice.

For the purpose of this research, spirituality was defined in Quaker terms. Although Quakers are not uniform in their spiritual beliefs, there are several key principles that have characterized the Society of Friends since its beginnings in the seventeenth century.

At the heart of Quaker spirituality is a belief that there is "that of God" in every person (Bacon, 1985). Sometimes described as the "inner light" or the "inner knowing," this belief connotes God's immanence in our lives and God's willingness to speak to one who listens. Anyone has the potential ability to hear, understand, and act from the knowledge gained by listening to this "inner light" (Stewart, 1953). The ability to listen closely is refined through weekly silent Meetings for Worship in which members meet together in unprogrammed private prayer, without the aid of music, readings, or architectural or religious symbols. As one Quaker writer describes the Meeting: "Worshippers wait in silence, endeavoring to make themselves as open as possible to the inflowings of Divine Life and as sensitive as possible to the whispering of the still, small voice. They cultivate not only awareness of God but also awareness of [others]" (Brinton, 1949, p. 13). Other characteristic Quaker principles include a commitment to honesty, belief in the equality of all people, simplicity in dress and manner, nonviolence, and service to others.

The Research Setting

Brinton Friends School was founded in 1961 by members of the local Friends Meeting House. The site of the school is a multiracial, working-class neighborhood in an otherwise affluent section of a large city. It was a conscious choice to locate the school in such a racially and economically diverse community because, as the founders stated in their first brochure, "it is symbolic of the challenge the school is attempting to meet—to provide a meaningful education for children by giving them tools for understanding and helping them to confront the problems of their community." There is a low- to middle-income housing project abutting the school property.

During 1990-91 there were forty-two full- and part-time faculty and staff and 209 children in kindergarten through grade eight. Twenty-six percent of the students were children of color.[5] Classes are team taught and curricula are developed by the teachers to suit the needs of that year's class. There are no department heads; following Quaker custom, the faculty and staff work together on administrative matters through consen-

sus decision making. In many ways the school is run by committees, with committee members grappling with an issue or idea before presenting it to the full faculty. Faculty are involved in hiring decisions and serve on the board of trustees.

The curriculum includes language arts, social studies, science, mathematics, music, art, drama, computer instruction, Spanish, and physical education. A learning specialist, a school psychologist, and a reading tutor are on the staff.

Although the school is still very much a part of the local Friends Meeting, currently only three staff members, including the Head, are Quaker. As is true with many other Quaker schools, the majority of attending families are also not Quaker. In addition, of the forty-two faculty and staff, three are people of color (all African or African American), only one of whom is a classroom teacher.

In its current mission statement, BFS affirms its commitment to becoming a multicultural institution:

> *We are committed to social justice and are convinced that a diverse faculty and student body gives the richest educational experience. To achieve our goal of a multicultural, anti-racist, antihomophobic community, the school seeks students from a diverse range of family structures and racial, cultural, socio-economic, and religious backgrounds.*

The Quaker philosophy of the school is also apparent in the mission statement's description of the Quaker belief in the inner light or "that of God" in every person. The school affirms these beliefs as an expression of "faith in the potential for growth within each individual student":

> *Students are encouraged to think through the moral implications of their resolutions and to stand up firmly for what they believe, even in the face of opposition. In [BFS], as well as all over the world, human beings need to learn to trust their inner rightness and to be unafraid to speak out. It is our belief that BFS helps to awaken within children an awareness of such spiritual strengths.*

Other Quaker principles are reflected in the silent Meeting for Worship held in each classroom one morning a week, the emphasis on simplicity in dress and manner, the de-emphasis on competition, and the involvement of students in consensus decision making about their own and group activities and about conflicts and their resolution.

The Process of Change: Historical Background

From its founding, teachers at Brinton Friends have taught about other ethnic and racial cultures. Starting in kindergarten, children learn about their own cultural background and that of their classmates. In lower school, combined grades one and two, children might learn about Native American cultures. Children in middle school, combined third and fourth, would likely learn about India or China. In an early report to the state Independent School Association, the school explained the purpose of such immersion in a particular culture was to "expose the children to another culture and lifestyle which inspires observation and dialogue about similarities and differences between cultures."

In the late 1970s, some members of the school community, many of them White, began to talk about the need for more diversity among the staff and student body. As one person put it to me, "We began to realize how White we were." Organized as the Outreach for Diversity Committee, this group of concerned individuals pressed the school to look at how homogeneous it was both racially and culturally. After much faculty discussion, they organized in-service workshops that gave staff the opportunity to explore their own ethnic backgrounds and those of their colleagues and to begin to explore the application of multicultural education in the classroom.

Based on this burgeoning interest in multicultural education, the school was invited in 1986 to become one of seven pilot schools nationwide to participate in the first year of the Multicultural Assessment Plan, or MAP, being developed by the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS). The MAP asks questions that help a school explore where and how issues of diversity and multicultural education exist within its own corporate structure. According to a recent *NAIS Multicultural Update Newsletter*, "The MAP is designed primarily to respond to individual and institutionalized racism as it is manifested in independent schools" (Fall 1990). The MAP consists of a self- assessment instrument completed by the school, followed by a team visit by independent school faculty, staff, and administrators.

Life after MAP

In its final report, the MAP visiting team made several recommendations, several of which the school acted on immediately (NAIS, 1988). For instance, the Outreach for Diversity Committee was given the status of a formal board of trustees committee and renamed the AntiRacism Committee, reflecting the antiracist, rather than solely multicultural, approach that the school now adopted. This committee is racially diverse, composed of teachers, parents, and board members, and has responsibility for guiding the school's multicultural efforts in consultation with the full faculty. In addition, members of the school community began to participate in the diversity conferences held yearly by NAIS. And, of key importance, the school acted on the recommendation to hold racism awareness workshops for board members, faculty, and staff.

These workshops were reported to be transformative experiences for individual members of the school community as well as for the school as an institution. Held in 1988 over a two-and-a-half day period, and facilitated by skilled trainers, the retreat was attended by all staff and board members. Staff were divided into separate, racially homogeneous groups. Black parents were invited to participate in the people of color workshop because of the small number of Black staff and to provide a broader perspective on issues for people of color in the school.[6] In the workshop attended by White staff, participants learned "about our own racism in the context of where and how we were brought up [and] participated in several activities which further brought home what it means to be a White person in this country and the power and mobility one has by virtue of this fact" (School Newsletter, Summer 1989). Recurring themes for Black participants in the people of color workshop were the isolation they feel within the predominantly White BFS community and the importance to their children of finding the support to maintain their distinct cultural identities.

The decisions to participate in the MAP and to hold the racism awareness workshop were made by consensus. Unanimity was not achieved quickly or easily. The biggest obstacle to immediate acceptance of the idea was the fear among many people that such a project would polarize the school. Some White teachers were anxious about having to confront their own racism. As one teacher told me: "It's such a volatile issue, looking at your own culture, your own baggage, how you teach. [I was afraid] we would rip open at the seams."

The learning done in the MAP and subsequent workshops propelled the school through additional changes, including a concerted effort to attract more families of color (40 percent of the 1990-91 kindergarten class was children of color), a revamping of admissions and tuition-assistance policies to ensure equity, the development of a five-year institutional plan that includes among its goals diversifying the staff, and the beginning of an organized evaluation of the school's curriculum with the help of a curriculum consultant specializing in multicultural and antiracist education. The cost to the school for multicultural and antiracism training and consulting in the last four years was more than $40,000; the money was raised through donations from Friends Meeting, private foundations, anonymous gifts to the school, and financial support from the board of trustees.

White Teachers Respond to the Changes

When I asked White staff how they felt about the racism awareness workshops and the subsequent changes, nearly every person expressed enthusiasm. Some staff did express concern over the conflicts that have arisen because of the multicultural change process, but all I spoke with agreed that what the school is doing is important and necessary.

There were three persistent themes in what the White staff said about their reactions to the process. I called these themes "personal change," "hardest thing," and "silent resistance."

Personal Change

One teacher felt that the value of the racism awareness workshop was that it put everyone at more or less the same starting place in looking at their own racism and how it affects the community of the school. From this starting point, some individuals chose to incorporate the learning in a way that they felt changed their lives. Several remarks from individuals interviewed illustrate this:

> *It was really valuable because it just made me aware; I've just become so much more aware of racism in particular and all the different ways it manifests itself.*
>
> *Through all our work I have been trying to take some responsibility. I'm either part of the problem or I'm part of the solution, and which is it going to be? I've just done a lot of soul searching about it.*
>
> *I feel like years ago, if I [kept] asking this question [about racism] people [would] get annoyed at me. Now I think it's my responsibility, and that not asking was my way of copping out, of saying [to myself], "You don't have to ask the question because then you'll have people mad at you and you have*

to work with everyone." And now I feel like that's a cop-out, that you have to keep saying it anyway.... That if you know something exists, then you have to say that it exists.

In some ways it's been sort of a blow to my own identity, feelings of identity, because I've always been a pretty opinionated person, and I feel like the older I get right now the less I know about myself and where I stand, in a certain way. I feel quite malleable right now, rather than feeling sure of myself.

It was very powerful. On all kinds of levels. Bringing up childhood remembrances and realizing how boxed [in] I have been. The good part is that it just keeps growing, the awareness. I realize that even though this happened a year and a half ago, or whatever it was, it's like a little seed that's gotten planted. You feel yourself peeling off layers of glue, stuckness, you know. Becoming more, I feel I'm becoming more open, and realize what an endless process it really is. That if you aren't alert to it all the time that stuff can creep back in.

One White teacher described an experience she had had several years previously while teaching at a predominantly Black and Latino school. While teaching a unit on families, she went shopping for a baby doll for the children to "adopt" as a class. She remembers wanting to find a dark-skinned doll, but everything she found that was dark-skinned was hard plastic and not very "cuddly":

I fell in love with this very White, cuddly, blue-eyed, blondish, whatever, baby doll, and it was just very much like a real baby. It was cuddly. It was a beautiful doll, so I bought that. And at that point my desire to have the doll be a cuddly doll overrode my desire for it to be a doll with a darker skin. And so I look back at photos of this class and there are all these Black children holding this white, white baby doll.

Now, she says, she would never repeat that experience.

Hardest Thing

Many participants acknowledged that doing this work takes its toll. As one said, "The hard part with this work on antiracism is it's so hard to get through all these walls that we all have. And it's painful; it's not always fun."

Several White people mentioned that the hardest thing for them was feeling guilty about being White, or guilty because they were not doing more against racism. One person has felt guilty about her racist attitudes, some of which she still holds. Another said she is very conscious now of "being a majority person. I don't like that a whole lot." When I asked her if she felt she wanted to change who she was, she said "Sometimes. And I also don't feel like I have any ethnicity, which is ridiculous." One teacher mentioned feeling that her White European heritage is a burden:

It was quite painful to accept the meaning of being White in this kind of society.... I do feel as though a lot of the mess that the world is in right now

> *is a mess that was created by White Europeans going around the world and exploiting and overpowering cultures and countries all over the planet. And that the damage has been tremendous. So I feel as though it's a really terrible legacy, in this country as well as with the native peoples here. To me it's a terrible legacy to be living with.*

Two teachers mentioned how inadequate they feel as White people teaching material by or about people of color. As one put it, "I don't want to be told that I'm not doing it right. I want to be told, but I don't want to hear it. You know? Cause I like to think I'm working hard on this, on some levels."

Silent Resistance

Silent resistance was a more difficult theme to assess, since all participants I spoke with expressed support for the school's multicultural efforts. But the way some staff spoke about the attitudes of others offered valuable information. One teacher felt the racism awareness workshops "helped a lot of people" but noted that those it did not help "don't say anything." I was told of a "phase" the school went through in which some people wanted to know "why don't we talk about all cultures, like the European cultures," and that there is still some tension over whether White European cultures at the school should be considered part of the diversity.

One teacher told me of another who feels pressured by the increased emphasis on a multicultural curriculum: "He knows there's a lot of interest in our community to teach from other materials, and he doesn't really want to give up what he's teaching." Another teacher told me she wonders if she belongs at the school now: "My way of teaching is probably fine. But it's more that if I were applying for my job now I probably wouldn't get it because I'm not the kind of person the school is looking for." She feels the school is being asked to take responsibility in areas that she, at least, does not feel qualified for or even interested in.

One White teacher who has been at the school many years expressed the kind of reservations about multicultural education that are typical of educators who are highly knowledgeable in their own subject area. She said:

> *I want very much to teach vocabulary and language and upscale, challenging literature. It's important to me. I really want to read things with kids that make them think as well as discuss the concepts. And it's been very difficult to find literature by people of other cultures that gives that kind of challenge. And I know that part of it is that I haven't looked enough, although I have looked.... I feel uncomfortable reading stuff that isn't very well written, just because it has to do with cultures or issues or races or whatever that we want kids to know about.*

Her feelings, however, are more ambivalent than it appears here. She says, "The workshop was exciting because it taught me something about me that I could do something about." But she worries that she is simply unqualified, as a White middle-class person, to teach literature of other cultures.

What these examples indicate is that for many White people at BFS the process

of multicultural change is complex. It can raise personal feelings of anguish as well as enlightenment, of conflict as well as satisfaction. As in any predominantly White institution undergoing multicultural change, people are at different stages on the continuum of White racism awareness (Katz, 1978). My research indicates that for some White teachers at BFS, personal change is coming more slowly than for others, but it is coming.

Maintaining the Commitment: The Story of Sarah

During my time at the school I had the opportunity to observe how the school maintained its commitment to antiracism education. Sarah had been hired in spring 1990 to be the new music teacher for the 1990-91 year. The music position is a key one in the school. Weekly assemblies are often attended by parents who watch their children perform, and a great deal of the spirit of the school is expressed through song and performance.

During a BFS search, candidates are given a tour of the school and have the opportunity to meet the staff. They are interviewed by the Head individually, as well as by the members of the search committee. They are also asked to teach a class. Decisions about which candidate to hire are made by the search committee using consensus, in consultation with the Head.

The search for a new music director had not been easy. By the last day of school, the search committee had identified only two viable candidates, a woman "whose philosophy and whose music were wonderful but [who] was a wet fish [with the kids]," or Sarah, who seemed to be able to cope well with the kids but had little knowledge of multicultural music. During her interview, however, she expressed a willingness to learn more about multicultural education. A member of that hiring committee told me, "We hired her because we didn't have anybody else to hire." Another said, "We hired her because she was the only person who had control and she was the only one who had control of the class of those people that we saw. And we were hoping that we would be able to get her to change with the kinds of things that she would teach."

As the school year progressed, it became apparent that Sarah's educational values differed markedly from those of the school. She was described as a mismatch on three levels. First, her musicianship was not considered up to the standards of BFS. In contrast to Sarah, past music teachers had, as the Head described it, "spent hours living and kind of breathing music and really very much owned the pieces they did with the kids and with this community."

Second, some school members reported concerns about the way Sarah interacted with the kids. She was described as "patronizing," as not trusting kids "in the sense of being willing and able to talk with them or to listen to them." Children were disturbed by remarks she made in class that emphasized a competitive approach to learning. Comments such as "The last class sang four songs and you've sung only three," "You're doing much better than the other fifth-grade class did," or "The soft voices can't sing in assembly, only the loud voices can" were contrary to the BFS philosophy of noncompetition.

Third, there was concern about Sarah's ignorance of multicultural education, her increasing resistance to learning more, and even her sometimes blatant, though unconscious, racism. This racism manifested itself, for instance, in her choice of songs and poems that were heavily stereotypical. In addition, in planning a play in which the lower-school children were acting the part of various animals, Sarah assigned monkey masks to all the Black children while the White children played lions, giraffes, and other animals.

Sarah struggled to understand what it was the school meant by "multicultural" and "antiracist." The school tried to help her by providing a buddy teacher, by sending her to conferences on multicultural education and other issues, and by involving her in a new teachers' support group. But as Sarah was exposed to more information about multicultural and antiracist education, she became more defensive and withdrawn, and less and less willing to examine her own attitudes and assumptions about teaching styles or racial differences. This is not an unusual response in people asked to confront their personal responsibility for racism (Katz, 1978).

During Thanksgiving week, after numerous complaints to the head from parents, staff, and even children at the school, Sarah was asked to leave. It is important to note that the failure of this hiring lies not with Sarah, who is simply at a different place along the continuum of White racism awareness than other members of the school community, but with the school's lack of clarity in defining to Sarah its expectations about multicultural, antiracist teaching and with their willingness to hire someone who did not match their job specifications.

Impact of Quaker Values on a Process of Multicultural Change

So far, in some ways, I could be describing any predominantly White institution that is struggling to become more diverse. But the unique quality of this institution is that it is a Quaker school. When asked what it means to them to teach in a Quaker school, nearly all of the interviewed teachers identified several core Quaker values that they feel reinforce the community of the school and that are important to them. My research has led me to conclude that these core values can both support and hinder the process of multicultural change. Several people mentioned what they saw as inevitable conflicts in trying to be, as one teacher said, "as multicultural and as diverse as we can be, and yet we're a Quaker school with certain values that we feel we believe in and we want to impart to the kids. And so, it's kind of hard to know how those two things match." One White teacher who is especially concerned about this issue feels that "the onus for being bicultural is always on the person of color, not on the White community." She feels strongly that it is important for all members of the BFS community to feel comfortable in the school.

One issue is the informality in the school, a manifestation of the Quaker value of simplicity, and in particular children calling teachers by their first names. As one White person said to me after discussing this issue with a Black parent: "[She] says that she's a parent, she's known her kids' teachers for fifteen years. She would no more call them by their first name than fly to the moon. And she said that respect, and respect in that particular regard, is very important in the Black community. That kids have very

particular ways of addressing people, none of which are by their first names."

Nonviolence has also been an area of cultural conflict for the school. Some children have come to BFS from families that condoned fighting as a defense strategy or from neighborhoods where daily violence is not unusual. American culture in general is violent. It can be hard for a school environment to overcome this conditioning. As one person told me, teachers at BFS have talked often about how to help the children enjoy Halloween while discouraging them from coming to school as "Darth Vader types, which would then lead to a host of behaviors during the school day that the school doesn't like or permit."

No one at the school feels that violence or aggression should be encouraged, but there is some difference of opinion on the school's role. One person said to me: "I think it's a disservice here when you teach that this is the way to go when in fact there are other ways that right now are going on that you have to be aware of. This pacifist stuff can get you into big trouble sometimes." But in general the attitude seems to be, as one person expressed it, "We can talk about *here* this is what we're doing, because there are ways to solve problems, different ways to solve problems, and one way is the way you've got to do it at home, and one way is the way you've got to do it here. And they'll serve you different purposes in life." Or, as another teacher put it, "basically what the kids learn, this world is one way, and the world at home is another way."

Competition is another issue that prompts different responses. In general, the tone of the school, as described by one long-time staff member, is that "your work is part of you, and how can somebody judge you or your work as being better than somebody else, when we're all wonderful." But, as one person of color noted, one way children of color can build their self-esteem is through having their work recognized and highlighted. According to a White staff member, the school deals with this tension by trying not to be too "mushy about things." She continues:

> *I mean, it's true of kids of color probably, in that most kids of color have not been brought up as Quakers or upper middle class people who can afford not to be competitive. Still all and all, I do think that an atmosphere that is highly competitive is really hard on kids. There are a few who come out real well, the ones who win. But there are an awful lot who don't win. That's been in a lot of ways harder on poor kids of color than not being able to compete has, and I think that you could do things in ways that are somewhat competitive."*

The Quaker concern for others is the springboard for the antiracism work in this school. The belief that there is that of God in every person, regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical ability, or class, is a hallmark of Quaker faith. Even those teachers who say they do not believe in God chose this as one of the school's principles that is most meaningful to them. The Head of the school, herself a Quaker, describes it as a school that has "a really profound belief in the importance of every person."

At the same time, this Quaker concern for others has had its drawbacks, as the story of Lucy illustrates. Lucy is an African American teacher hired in the spring of 1989

as a sabbatical replacement in one of the first/second-grade classrooms. She had over twenty years experience in public schools and came with glowing references. She was the unanimous choice of the search committee. During her first week on the job, when some of the children, after three requests, still would not clean up their projects and put their things away, Lucy told all those who were misbehaving to sit at a table with their heads on their arms until they could do what they had been asked to do. This mild form of punishment sent shock waves through the parent community.

In attempting to cope with this situation, the then-acting Head of the school tried to balance concern for the parents who were upset with concern for Lucy. This resulted, ultimately, in what Lucy perceived to be an undermining of her abilities as a teacher. Because the administration of the school did not firmly support her actions, she felt her credibility with parents was lost, and she was left wondering how she would be attacked next. The pressure on her was too great, and, after becoming physically ill from stress, she resigned from the school six weeks after starting.

Some staff told me they are sure the parents would have been less likely to question Lucy's actions had she been White. As one administrator said to me:

> *I think there's a lot of nitpicking that goes on, and despite all of our multicultural, embracing sort of rhetoric, I think some parents have a real fear of having a Black person teaching their child, because there are all of the issues that nobody would admit to openly, but are sort of gnawing at the back of their mind. Did she get the job because she's Black? Is she really qualified? Is she really competent to teach my kid?*

One person felt that what made Lucy's situation even more difficult was "a very clear indication that 'you don't understand the rules,' and that not understanding the rules gets you in big trouble." Lucy also reportedly felt strongly that the administration, in the way it had attempted to balance what it perceived as her needs with those of the parents, had not been supportive of her. As one person of color at the school noted:

> *[The acting head] thought that she was being real clear. She thought she was being clear and fair. Fair to Lucy by saying we back Lucy, fair to the parents by saying [Lucy] has these recommendations and this is her experience, and laying that all out in front of the parents. I know as a Black person that that ain't done, and as soon as you say that, in my experience what you're saying is "we don't trust you."*

This story was related to me by several teachers as an example of how the school's Quaker value of balancing concern for all members of the school community backfired in an unfortunate and unintentionally racist way.

The spiritual dimension of the school elicits different responses as well. Meeting for Worship, held weekly in each classroom, is the only overtly religious aspect of the school. Here the spiritual base of the school, as well as the spiritual contradictions, can most clearly be seen. Many of the teachers say they do not believe in God. One person called it the "G" word, saying "anytime you bring spirit and God into it, it just shuts me down a lot." Yet another person said, "My belief in God is at the center of my exist-

ence … and everything that I do is guided by that." Consequently, Meetings for Worship vary tremendously from room to room. In the lower grades, children are asked to silently draw or write in a Meeting for Worship journal that is their private book. Occasionally in kindergarten children can work silently with clay. All the staff I interviewed appreciated the *idea* of Meeting for Worship, but some of them did not know what to *do* with that time. In one third/fourth-grade Meeting for Worship, the teacher asked the children to think about why they come to Meeting. Among their responses were "to be together as a group," "to be relaxed and think about things we don't normally think about," and "to talk to God." The teacher for this class is a Quaker and is able to help the children understand the purpose of Meeting. After I observed Meeting in her classroom, she said to me, "It's misleading to say it was a good Meeting just because kids were quiet." Yet in other classrooms, where teachers see the Meeting more as a time for quiet than as a time for worship, there is a perceptible difference in the feeling of stillness in the room.

At its best Meeting for Worship is a time for individuals to stop and think, or to connect with the power that can move them forward, or connect to values that keep them going. I saw an example of this in a Meeting for Worship initiated by a staff member the day the entire school learned that Sarah, the music teacher, had left. In this forty-minute Meeting, various people spoke spontaneously, describing their feelings about this incident and what it meant for the school. Between these remarks the room settled into complete silence. Elizabeth, one of the last people to speak, described how Sarah had said to her that BFS was one of the most intolerant places she had ever worked. And Elizabeth told the Meeting: "Multicultural doesn't mean being color blind or tolerant. It calls for naming it when we see it, an intolerance of racism and other forms of oppression. It is painful. We have to keep that in mind, that we must name it." There was another moment of silence, and then the group joined hands to end the Meeting. I wrote in my field notes, "I sense a definite feeling of closeness, of bonding. It's as though some power has come into the room. The feeling is palpable." But I was ambivalent about this event. Throughout the Meeting only support for the decision to fire Sarah was expressed. Others who I know were at least ambivalent about it said nothing. And to me as an observer, while I cannot deny the positive feeling I discerned of bonding and community building, there was also an element of closing ranks, of a ritual slaying of the outsider, that I found troubling. Still, Elizabeth is right. To be multicultural means that some forms of behavior are not acceptable.

Summary

In its efforts to become a multicultural, antiracist institution, Brinton Friends School has made notable progress. Participation in a multicultural assessment program and racism awareness workshops have helped members of the school community analyze institutional policies and practices as well as personal attitudes. Changes have been made in admissions and tuition-assistance policies to ensure equity, a curriculum consultant has been hired to help teachers analyze classroom practices, and progress has been made in increasing the number of families of color in the school.

While there have been achievements, there have also been pitfalls. The hiring

process that resulted in Sarah being appointed music director was devastating for both Sarah and the school. Through no fault of her own, Sarah found herself in a position where her abilities did not match the school's expectations. To some extent this was also true in the case of Lucy, who had a classroom management style that differed from what the BFS community expected. Through these experiences, BFS learned the hard way that it must be extremely clear with applicants about what the school's teaching philosophy is and what it means by multicultural and antiracist education, and that it must choose candidates who have the qualifications the school requires.

There have also been some tensions between the multicultural work and some of the school's Quaker values. The informality of the school, its emphasis on nonviolence and de-emphasis on competition, have been issues for some children and parents. The school community must continue to be self-monitoring, to observe its culture and whether that culture is inclusive, to evaluate which pieces of the school's culture are inseparable from the school's mission and which pieces will block further change efforts.

Staff members agree that doing antiracism work is not always easy. It requires looking at one's personal attitudes and behaviors and being willing to change. Not surprisingly, there are some White staff who are more ambivalent about the process than others. There has been tension over what exactly "diversity" means, with some White staff feeling it should include White European cultures. Other teachers are resistant to incorporating multicultural approaches into their curriculum, either because they are unsure about their ability to teach from a multicultural perspective or because they like their curriculum the way it is.

Open dialogue is crucial for any institution undergoing this kind of change. Although the organizational structure at BFS encourages discussion and group participation through consensus decision making, there is still fear among some people about voicing opposition to the change process, perhaps because they fear they will be called racist. As the school continues to redefine itself as a multicultural, antiracist organization, a climate of open dialogue must be created between all members of the school community, many of whom will have multiple and sometimes differing perspectives on the change process. The use of consensus has been compared to a musical composition in which each participant has a note to contribute. If too many notes are missing, the theme loses its beauty and possibly its recognizability (Sheerhan, 1983). For the change process to be effective, all members of the group must have a voice in it.

People at BFS acknowledge there is still a lot to do. Staff speak of the need to involve more White parents in antiracism training and of the need to increase the number of faculty of color. The teachers hope to have a second round of racism awareness workshops, fondly called RAW II, to keep the momentum going.

Everyone at the school agrees that this is a long-term process, with no quick solutions. As one member of the staff said to me: "When we first started this work I thought, we've got to get this all wrapped up together in a day or two because it's so horrendous that it's just got to change. [And then I was reminded] that, look, we've got about a ten- or twenty-year project here. Just relax. We're not going to solve it all right away."

NOTES

1. Names of the school and participants have been changed throughout this article.
2. For a fuller description of methodology, please see Carolyn R. O'Grady, "That of God in Every Person: Multicultural Change in a Quaker School," Unpublished dissertation, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Fall, 1991.
3. See, for example, Brown, 1988; Butler, 1990; Guttierez, 1984; Kennedy, 1984; Kovel, 1991; Lerner, 1986; Macy, 1984; Purpel, 1989; Westerhoff, 1987; and Zappone, 1984.
4. See also Dickeman, 1973; Brandt, 1986; and Phillips, 1988.
5. This represents a total of fifty-five out of 209 students. There were twenty-eight African Americans, two Asians, two Native Americans, and twenty-three biracial students (including Black/White, Asian/Black, Latino/Anglo, and Middle Eastern/White).
6. This experience was not made available to people of color other than African Americans. The reasons for this, I was told, were that Black families represent the majority of families of color in the school, and there was a wish not to generalize to all people of color but speak specifically to the experiences in the school of African Americans. Participaants in this workshop subsequently formed a support group, with some of its activities open to all people of color.

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DEMOCRACY AT WORK IN THE CLASSROOM

EDUCATING FOR DEMOCRACY AND COMMUNITY: TOWARD THE TRANSFORMATION OF POWER IN OUR SCHOOLS

Seth Kreisberg

When I come out of this classroom it's almost like I'm in another school, because the way he teaches is so different from other teachers.

—Student in Keith Grove's tenth-grade geometry class at Dover-Sherborn High School

In [other classes], the teacher is in charge; you come in, sit down, you can't be late, and you have to sit and listen to a teacher lecture.... In this class it's like everybody teaches everybody else.

—Student describing Keith Grove's math class

Two low, red-brick buildings and their adjacent green playing fields nestle in the lush New England woods of Dover, Massachusetts, a suburb of Boston. In this pastoral setting, 430 students in grades 9-12 attend classes at Dover-Sherborn High School. Keith Grove's classroom is on the second floor. Save for a couple of posters on the wall and in the corner harboring Grove's desk, the room is bare.

It is one of those crisply bright early spring days. Nesting birds can be heard in the distance. A group of tenth graders sit in a tight U formation, facing the blackboard. Grove sits with his geometry students in the U. A student facilitator asks for a volunteer to go to the board to begin solving one of the homework problems. Leaving her book behind, the volunteer approaches the board. Another student reads the problem to the class and explains her understanding of the question. The student at the board writes down the important information and begins to work on the problem. While writing each step on the board, she thinks out loud about the assumptions of the problem and the theorems and process that may be used to solve it. When the student at the board begins to have difficulty, other students raise their hands to offer suggestions. Another student goes to the board to show how he would proceed. When he has made his

point clearly, he returns to his chair. The first student finishes the problem and returns to her seat. Another student summarizes the problem-solving strategy used and then asks if everyone in the class understands how the problem was solved before moving on to the next.

The path to this and the other mathematics classes Keith Grove teaches has been a long, exciting, and sometimes painful one of growth and experimentation. After six years of teaching high school mathematics, Grove was increasingly dissatisfied with his teaching:

> *What I used to do is go [into class] with a lesson plan.... I felt that it was up to me to keep the class on track, to keep control, to motivate students.... I felt that I knew what was best, and it was up to me to get that across to students.... It was boring ... and the students said it was boring for them as well.... I heard myself talk a lot.*[1]

Upon close examination of his own classroom and of his students' educational experiences, he came to see that

> *students, occupying the bottom rung of the hierarchical ladder, often are not taught to listen, are not asked to develop their own voices, are not taught to respect the perspectives of others, and are not asked to think critically about classroom issues or to participate in classroom decisions that affect their lives. (Grove, 1989, p. 10)*

Grove felt the need to change his approach to teaching. While he knew he was a competent and caring teacher, he did not feel that his work as a teacher was connected directly enough to his concern for the future of the world. He also knew that his teaching was failing to fully engage his students and himself. Underlying his pedagogical transformation was his growing understanding of two central themes of our times: the importance of individuals' participation in decisions that affect their lives and global interdependence. He came to believe that he should and could be doing much more to empower his students. If he could help them develop their voices through the creation of a truly democratic classroom, he could best prepare them to be effective future citizens in a democracy.

His thinking was congruent with the point of view of two educators, Gene Grambs and John Carr:

> *That democracy can, and should, be operative in education is based on the assumption that citizenship in a democracy demands practical, long-standing training in how to function in such a system. To deny students this training is to restrict their personal growth and thus to limit the resources of society.... Democracy is learned behavior. We are not born with it. And many do not learn it at all, or learn it only partially, for themselves, or else want to find the Big Boss who can take care of everything. Citizenship is so much more than knowing how a bill becomes a law, or voting on Election Day. Democracy is an array of behaviors which regulate how we behave in the privacy of our homes, in our neighborhood,*

> *on the job, and in public places. It is only when young people in school experience over and over again, in thousands of individual incidents, the ways in which democracy works and feels that they are going to be able to act democratically. (Grambs and Carr, 1979, p. 73)*

At its core, democracy is a set of social institutions and social relationships in which people participate in the decisions that affect their lives. Democratic participation calls for a specific range of skills, dispositions, and behaviors that allow people to engage in dialogue, disagreement, and decision making as equals (Grambs and Carr, 1979). Learning to govern oneself as an equal member of a community also means developing the ability to be both assertive and open to others. It requires people to have the capacity to listen to others with care and sensitivity. Democratic citizens must be wiling and able to work with others cooperatively and to integrate different viewpoints into their own positions. They must be firm enough to stand up and be heard, yet flexible and secure enough to continue to grow and change.

Grove began to explore approaches to teaching that could nurture the skills and attitudes on which a democratic community depends. He helped students to develop concrete skills in cooperation, critical thinking, and group problem solving, as well as the willingness and ability to take responsibility for themselves and for others.

In particular, he came to focus on the dynamics of power and the structure of social relationships in his classroom. These have been boldly described by Theodore Sizer in his analysis of the American high school, *Horace's Compromise*. Sizer carries us through an average day in the life of the average high school adolescent, outlining what he calls a "systemized conveyor belt" process where the "clock is king." In Sizer's school day, fictional but all too familiar, a student named Mark shuffles from one class to another, reading aloud, memorizing, responding repetitively to factual questions, and listening to teachers talking. Mark's school life is controlled by the various adults in whose rooms he sits for fifty minutes at a time. Mark is rarely encouraged to think for himself, and he has little control over his experience in the classroom or the school.

Sizer argues that the situation today in schools has worsened: authoritarian teaching pervades education in the United States. The nature of authoritarian education is most fundamentally defined by the dynamics of power in the classroom. Power in the authoritarian classroom is *power over*—a relationship of inequality in which an individual or group (i.e., teachers and administrators) has the ability to control the behavior, thoughts, and values of others (i.e., students).

Power over manifests itself in the lives of students in two central ways: in students' relationships with teachers and administrators and in their relationship to the knowledge they are asked to consume. The result is an educational system that preaches democracy but models and teaches the opposite.

Paulo Freire, the Brazilian educator, accurately describes the dynamics of pedagogical relationships characterized by power over. He points out the "teacher/student contradiction" that is based on relationships of domination and submission. In these relationships "the teacher teaches and the students are taught; the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing; the teacher talks and the students are disciplined; the teacher chooses the content and the students who were not consulted

adapt to it" (Freire, 1970, p. 59). Students are alienated from the material studied: it is not grounded in their experience. It is someone else's knowledge about what someone else thinks is important. Nevertheless, it is presented as truth, to be stored by the students and regurgitated on demand. Students experience knowledge as imposed from above, absorbed through an act of submission. Schools, says Sizer, are cultivating docility. He quotes Charles Silberman, who wrote in the early 1970s about docility, powerlessness, and schooling:

> *Docility is not only encouraged but frequently demanded.... The tragedy is that the great majority of students do not rebel; they accept the stultifying rules, the lack of privacy, the authoritarianism, the abuse of power—indeed virtually every aspect of school life—as The Way Things Are. (Sizer, 1984, p. 56)*

Authoritarian teaching encourages passivity, conformity, obedience, acquiescence, and unquestioning acceptance of authority. It is antidemocratic and undermines the most basic ideas and principles embedded in our political system.

Creating a Democratic Classroom

Grove was uncomfortable in his authoritarian role. He sensed that his teaching methods cultivated behaviors and values contrary to his democratic ideals. This realization led him gradually to transform his approach to teaching mathematics.

He forged four key themes to support the new approach: community, shared decision making, cooperative learning, and individual and group problem solving. From the first day of school Grove addresses these themes. He works hard to build a foundation for the kind of learning he hopes to nurture, in which he gradually and patiently helps students to develop the skills necessary to function successfully in a democratic classroom. While he has clear goals for the class, he remains flexible, attentive to pacing, and responsive to particular individuals' and groups' needs. First, he asks his students to sit in a circle rather than in the traditional rows with the teacher at the head of the classroom. This circle symbolizes his desire to change power relationships in the classroom, while it structurally encourages students to interact as equals with one another as well as with the teacher. But he goes much further in challenging the traditional dynamics of the classroom:

> *We make rules together. We make decisions regarding discipline together. We decide on evaluation technique.... It's hard to decide curriculum together.... It's an algebra class so we are studying algebra. But as far as possible I allow them to determine the speed with which we cover the material, the length of the homework assignment, and things like that.*

He begins by clearly explaining his goals for the class: the central reason the group is together is to learn mathematics. To do this he believes that it is essential for them to develop a sense of community and the ability to work cooperatively, because the best results in learning come about when individuals and groups use all the resources available both within and outside themselves. He offers his definition of a classroom

community:

> *A group ... which values and appreciates differences of opinion, whose members share a commitment to common purposes and procedures, whose members are responsible for their own learning and for the learning of everyone in the class, which operates on consensus, which sees itself as a group of leaders, and which deals with conflict constructively. (Grove, 1989, p. 10)*

Grove is clear that he would like the students to take increasing responsibility for their own learning. For this to happen, it is crucial that everyone in the class develop mutual respect and trust because they will be teaching one another. These attitudes are just as important to students' growth and learning as the specific skills and knowledge of algebra and geometry. He stresses the importance of a relaxed atmosphere in which everyone feels valued and able to try new ways of teaching and learning. Finally, he emphasizes that math class should also be fun.

Next, Grove engages the class in a series of community-building exercises, which he continues throughout the semester. His goal is to help students get to know one another as individuals with different priorities, needs, and values. He begins by involving the class in an exercise to help everyone learn the names of all group members. He then has students interview one another and present their interviewee to the group as a whole. Another community-building activity he uses is the Mystery Game, in which he presents each member of the class with a piece of information necessary to solve a mystery that can be solved only with full group participation and careful listening. These activities begin to forge a community out of a group of individuals, creating a feeling of familiarity and comfort and offering practice in the skills necessary for supportive groups to function effectively.

Grove relies on cooperative learning techniques to help students develop the sense of connection and the ability to work together that are so important to the process he is seeking to create. He begins with frequent small-group work, building gradually from pairs to trios to groups of four or five. Throughout he reinforces the goals, skills, and attitudes necessary for effective group work.

In order to model his belief in the importance of human connection to the learning process, Grove begins every class by endeavoring to greet each student personally. He than has a brief "connections" period in which students discuss with the group events and issues from their lives inside or outside school. One student reflected on the value of this sharing time for her, "I realized that everyone else had the same problems that I did, and somehow it helped to make the day better."

Grove also involves students in developing a grading system for the course. Students develop innovative and sometimes very complex grading systems. For instance: "In one of the classes they decided on bonus incentives for the group to work toward. If every member of the group mastered the material and completed all the homework, bonus points would be earned." The method of grading is different from class to class, but what most classes have in common is that students are asked to offer self- and class evaluations on a regular basis, usually every other week, and to partici-

pate in giving themselves a grade, usually through some form of negotiation with Grove.

His goal has always been to move toward a point where students not only participate in developing rules and grading methods, but also share responsibility for facilitating class activities. Generally, however, he takes responsibility for introducing new material and stands at the blackboard as he asks questions, presents new ideas, explores the connections between ideas, develops an understanding of the concepts behind the procedures, and walks through some sample problems, emphasizing key points.

It is in the reviewing of problems and material after new ideas have been introduced and initially worked with that Grove sees the greatest opportunity to get students to lead class problem-solving sessions and to work together as a student-led group. He begins by modeling how to facilitate group problem solving of mathematical problems. By the middle of the year students begin to facilitate classes on their own:

> *In the latter part of the year I would ask if someone wanted to facilitate the class, which means that they would be in charge of keeping us on track, summarizing ideas, deciding how many problems to do, and involving as many students as possible. They were facilitating the conversations around the problems.*

When the students facilitate classes, one of Grove's key roles is to act as a resource for the facilitator. For example, one day when a student was facilitating a problem-solving session, it became apparent that the class would not achieve its goals for the day. With about five minutes left Grove approached the facilitator. The student suggested some ways they might adjust to these new circumstances. Grove agreed and offered some advice on how to wrap up the class. The student then completed her class facilitation.[2]

When the class is facilitating its own problem solving, Grove also serves as a resource for the content to be learned. As the class works through the problems, he encourages them to tap their own knowledge and expertise before they turn to him. However, if the group becomes truly stuck, he is available. As students describe it: "First he will try to see if someone in the class can figure it out for themselves, then if not, he will guide us toward it. He will give us hints on how to solve it. It is good because it will get everybody thinking, and giving ideas." For the most part, students understand the process Grove is encouraging and, in fact, they often do find that they can solve a problem among themselves, without his help.

The level of trust, mutual respect, and risk taking that occurs in some of Grove's classes is striking, as is evident in an incident that happened in an algebra class of ten students:

> *At the beginning of the class one student asked who was going to facilitate. Another student suggested that somebody new should give it a try. One student responded to this by suggesting that a particular student take on the role... who hadn't done so before. The student believed that he still wasn't ready and said so. Finally, another student said, "I think you'd make a great facilitator; why don't you give it a try?" The student who had been*

> *reluctant agreed to go ahead and try. I then watched the best facilitator I had the opportunity of seeing during my observations. (Yardley, 1989, p. 6)*

Grove attains many of his goals. The nature of his authority shifts from the authority of position or prescribed role—authority based on institutionally sanctioned and reinforced control over students—to the authority of expertise. Students come to respect and listen to him not so much because they must, but because they value what he knows and what he has experienced. This occurs, first, because he includes students in the decision-making and teaching process and, second, because of the quality of the relationship he has worked to establish with and among his students. He respects their voices and their expertise, and they in turn respect his. This is a relationship of mutuality. While teachers will always have power over their students as long as they work in traditional public schools, Grove's classroom points to the possibility of mediating this power and creating another basis for teacher-student relationships and learning.

One student eloquently reflected on his experience of Grove's classroom, suggesting the considerable benefits of restructured authority:

> *I don't know when I am going to have to know that when two parallel lines are cut by a transversal, then its opposite interior angles are congruent. Or that a triangle's angles add up to one hundred and eighty degrees. But I think I have learned more than just math in math class. I have learned to cooperate with other people. How to present a statement to a group of people and ask for their advice. I have learned how to work with other people in a community where everyone is equal—how to disagree with someone's statement and not argue with him by using words like stupid, dumb, and idiot. For me math taught me how to be in charge of a group of people and respect them and hope they respect you. Math was the first class where people actually listened to what [I] had to say.*

What this student learned in Grove's class were the skills and attitudes basic to functioning effectively and responsibly in a democracy.

"Rough Edges" in a Democratic Classroom

Successful though Grove has been in creating a more democratic classroom, he has found the process full of rough edges. He recalls three students who fought the process for the entire year, accusing him of "group therapy." He remembers their comments:

> "What is this? I thought you were the teacher?"
>
> "You are supposed to be in charge ... That is what you are paid for."
>
> "We learn best from you."
>
> "It's too confusing."
>
> "I learn best when the class is organized and quiet. We change the rules too often."

The typical high school student has spent his or her life in classrooms in which teachers make most, if not all, of the important decisions and are the source of all academically important information. He or she comes to accept this as the way schools are. Most adapt and learn to play the game. Thus, there is no reason to expect all, or even most, students to respond favorably or immediately to teaching that offers them a share of decision-making power. Grove's students expressed their feelings very honestly and their responses indicated wide initial discomfort. "I don't think anyone here liked it at first," one student reported. Another said, "We were used to a really structured math class. Last year my teacher—I really liked him— went through things step by step." At least some students, however, were also aware that much of their initial discomfort had more to do with their own socialization in schools than with something inherently wrong with Grove's approach. One said, "Usually it's like, you ask the question and the teacher answers, so that's why it didn't work at first. In here we were all just waiting for him to answer, no one wanted to jump in because we weren't supposed to. That was the teacher's job."

However, the students who were so uncomfortable at the beginning of the year talked about the class very differently at the end. When asked how they felt in Grove's class in comparison with other classes, they responded that they were "more comfortable" and "not as tense." One noted that

> *If you ask questions in other classes, a lot of times the teachers will look down on you and say, "You're stupid." They don't say that, but you know you can kind of see it in their face, but in here no question is ever stupid.*

Given students' initial expectations of teachers and their past experiences in school, how should a teacher committed to a democratic classroom deal with the paradoxical situation in which students may choose to give up their voice to the teacher, choose to have a teacher-controlled and teacher-centered class? Grove faced precisely this issue in two of his classes. In one class "there were five students in the class who really wanted me to teach, come in and present the problems and so forth, and although we stayed in circles and the evaluation model was slightly different from a traditional class, the class as a whole was very traditional and I presented the problems."

In other words, Grove modified his approach to meet their wish. However, just after the decision was made to abandon the collaborative problem-solving model in this class, he suggested that perhaps they might want to work in groups of two or three following a cooperative learning model. "Just at the point where they said they wanted me to make all the decisions," he reported, "I said well here is something we can try, and every kid in there said we'll try it, and they loved it." What Grove initially perceived as a student rebellion against democratic teaching in general was, in fact, a rebellion against his imposition of a particular teaching method that he preferred. He realized the problem:

> *It had something to do with my process, with what I have to learn about including them. They felt somehow not heard and I think it was because the way I wanted to run the class wasn't working and I think I kept forcing it rather than saying, "Tell me what is not working. How would you like to*

see it?" Having more of a blend of what I wanted and meeting them where they were.

The lesson Grove took away from this experience was not that some students are not capable of democratic learning and teaching, but rather that he must work harder to listen to them and include them:

Perhaps it had to do with levels of responsibility, levels of maturity, or different ways of thinking and learning on their parts. I think kids do learn differently at different stages of development. I think I didn't listen hard enough and include them in the process enough. As soon as I did that this one class turned around immediately and we hit on a cooperative method that I thought was highly successful and they really seemed to enjoy it.

As a result of this experience Grove has integrated small group cooperative learning much more centrally into his teaching.

Innovation and Personal Risk

Teachers committed to creating a learning environment of this kind face an array of obstacles: skeptical administrators and cynical colleagues as well as students adapted to teacher- dominated classrooms. After six years, Grove felt that he had honed his teaching skills. Reflecting back now, however, he notes that "it was...boring but [very] secure." The first year he tried his new approach was, in turn, often a lonely and risky time.

Within his classroom Grove experienced the personal doubt and questioning that always come whenever an individual explores new territory or challenges the status quo:

I felt vulnerable ... maybe they weren't covering enough material, maybe they weren't learning enough math. I couldn't tell. I had never done this before. Was it okay to cover only three problems instead of six with the kids at the board helping each other? Did they learn as much that way? Or would it have been better for me to cover six problems so that they could ask me questions and I could answer them real clearly and share my thinking with them? Then I realized that those weren't my only goals any more, that my goals had expanded. But, then again, maybe I was still doing them a disservice, in terms of SATs, getting them into college, competition with other students.

In particular Grove felt vulnerable as he worked to share power in the classroom with his students:

When you give up your role as sole authority in the classroom and try to share it, the relationships in the class change. There is a connection between caring about these kids, giving them a chance to make decisions, and trusting them. When they show, in small or large ways, that they aren't up to it, and they make mistakes and they violate trust, it hurts. It makes me

think, maybe these kids need more structure. Maybe I'm doing them a disservice by letting them draw the lines too much and creating their own boundaries, their own limits.

His self-questioning was intense and emotional. However, it was an essential component of a creative and ultimately positive experience:

I have never felt better about my teaching and the fact that I am a teacher nor have I felt as creative in the classroom. Whether I have been highly successful or not is open to debate, but in the past I just never felt that my thinking was going into the creation ... or the exploration of something as I did this year.

More painful and less positive was the vulnerability he felt in relation to his colleagues and his students' parents, who only heard of his teaching secondhand:

My vulnerability outside the classroom was even harder to deal with... Guidance counselors, other teachers, the head of the math department, and administrators would hear bits and pieces of what I was doing and it sounded bizarre to them.... They would hear that the students were teaching themselves.

In fact, five students in one class went to their guidance counselors and said, "He's not teaching. We're teaching ourselves." Then the parents of three of these students called the guidance counselor, who went to the head of the math department and told him what the students were saying. The head of the math department then came to Grove. While she assured him that she did not believe the accusations, she still was unclear as to what he was doing and asked him to explain his methods.

Grove was hurt that the guidance counselor had not come to him first to discuss the students' and parents' concerns. He felt isolated and misunderstood by his colleagues. "I felt we weren't working together as a team.... I got a little paranoid and ... started to see myself as outside of the system because I was trying to do something different."

Grove met with the head of the math department, the guidance counselor, and the principal. This led to long discussions with colleagues about the goals and methods that were guiding his teaching. He wrote his principal a letter explaining what he was trying to do and inviting him to visit a class. "He was fairly impressed. He said some positive things afterward. He suggested some ideas and suggested that we should talk more about this way of teaching."

As word spread to other teachers, colleagues began to express interest:

I had some private conversations with teachers.... We started sharing ideas and they said, "Oh that sounds interesting." Just a little reinforcement here and there.... After getting through the rough times with those people it felt better, the connections were stronger. We understood our philosophies of education and our goals a little better, and we could trust each other more because we had a chance to work on some of these issues and actually have some discussions that had some substance to them.

Since these first-year experiences Grove has also reached out more directly to parents by communicating regularly, inviting their participation, and keeping them informed about their child's successes and progress.

Throughout this process Grove has relied on a network of people he met during his years as a member of Educators for Social Responsibility. These like-minded educators provided him with encouragement and support and helped him overcome his doubts and continue with his work.

However, it was the reactions of his students that most sustained him in his commitment to democratizing his classroom: "There were enough students and enough times when I was touched by what was going on in the classroom, when I sensed a connection between people. The relationships touched me and moved me and I felt they moved the kids, too." When asked what she will remember about the class twenty years from now, one student wrote: "I will remember that one teacher had the faith in us to let us make up the rules. I will know that someone else realized that we were capable of creating something magnificent if given the chance and we were, and we did." Ultimately, it is these kinds of reactions from the students that make the risks and the work necessary to create democratic classrooms profoundly worthwhile.

Conclusion: The Movement for a Democratic Classroom

Keith Grove's work is innovative but not without precedent. For at least eighty years, since the days of John Dewey, there has been a consistent argument in educational theory in this country that has held that for education to respond most effectively to the interests and needs of both our children and our democratic culture, schools and classrooms must embody democratic values and processes. They must do more than preach about constitutional rights and democratic responsibilities. They must become participatory communities—communities based on the premise that they are created and maintained by students, parents, teachers, and administrators working together and sharing decision making. While this idea has never achieved wide acceptance, it is gaining new momentum as contemporary educators face the limitations of current educational practice—limitations that Keith Grove has surpassed in his classroom.

In a middle-school classroom in Harlem in New York City, a class discussion on "Whose country is it?" is led by a husky thirteen-year-old boy who asks questions, acknowledges fellow students wishing to speak, and summarizes statements. In a rural fifth-grade classroom in eastern Kentucky, students vote to write a history of their community. Together they write a grant proposal and secure and manage a grant from the Foxfire Foundation to publish the history book for local sale. In a rural high school in Sheffield, Massachusetts, student representatives are the majority in regular school Town Meetings with teachers, school secretaries, school custodians, and bus drivers. They participate in making decisions as varied as establishing smoking rules, changing study hall policy, and building speed bumps. Today, students lead discussions, work in cooperative groups, participate in the grading process, monitor their own homework, and establish the rules of the class.

In each of these situations the roles of students and teachers contrast dramatically with those traditional and predominant in American classrooms since Europeans

built their first schools on the continent. Put simply, these teachers and students have begun to transform the power relationships in their schools and classrooms. They are creating schools and classrooms that give students (and teachers) a greater voice in the decisions that affect their everyday school lives. Together, they are making schools more caring, more mutually respectful, and more democratic. Echoing John Dewey, they are putting into practice a very simple, yet potent idea: that the best way to learn how to participate in a democratic community is to live and learn in a democratic community. In the process they are creating more supportive learning communities that engage students' minds and hearts. The result is an educational experience that is more meaningful and empowering than the traditional classroom can provide, and one that prepares young people in very basic ways to build and participate in a democratic culture.

Grove's work has led him to conclude:

> *I am more convinced than ever that our schools can be democratic communities—places where young people learn about and experience what it means to live in a democracy and to act in socially responsible ways. I have discovered that providing students with the opportunities to think critically about issues helps them develop the skills, values, and attitudes necessary for participation in our democracy and in the cooperative resolution of the problems which challenge our world.*

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NOTES

1. Quotes in text, unless otherwise noted, come from interviews with author
2. This scene is based on an observation reported in an unpublished paper entitled "An Example of Empowering Students in a Mathematics Classroom," by Dan Yardley (see References).

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DEMOCRACY IN THE ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM: A CURRICULUM FOR INTERDEPENDENCE

Alan Medville

When someone asks me about the curriculum in my first-grade classroom, he or she usually has a specific subject area in mind: What is the science curriculum or the language arts program? I tend to reply in kind: "Well, we're studying the habits of fish or beginning to read." But while the component parts of a curriculum are designed to help students investigate specific concepts and master specific skills, a whole curriculum describes a total educational approach. The room arrangement, classroom protocol, and explicit subject matter are all parts of curriculum. They all bespeak what is being made available for the children to learn.

This essay describes how teachers, through the careful construction and selection of a curriculum, can help children understand, appreciate, and develop skills for the process of self-consciously living in a democracy. The success and quality of that process depend upon the degree to which individuals recognize their interdependence and fulfill their responsibility to the larger communities of which they are part, so that those communities may optimally serve the needs of each individual. Schools in a democratic society can help to strengthen the fabric of democracy by helping children experience and understand that interdependence.

Democracy, Community, and Relationship

The experience of community is central to understanding democracy, for it is the arena in which democracy as a system operates. How we define community has an important bearing on how we define democracy. I understand a community to be the network of interdependence among those forces, organisms, and organizational structures that live and/or support life in a given geographical area. This extends the parameters of community beyond its common usage of a group of people living in the same locale and under the same government. A community can be a humanly created social entity, such as a neighborhood or city, an institution, or a nation; or a naturally created one,

such as a forest, a watershed region, or an ecosystem. However, all social communities are natural as well, because human communities are necessarily responsible for and dependent upon the well-being of the natural community of which they are a part.

That fact, simple and profound, suggests that we should recast our view of the scope and purpose of democracy. It is both more basic and more comprehensive than the conventional definition of democracy as a political system of collective decision making by voting and debate. Democracy is a systematic acknowledgment and formalization of our interdependent relationships with each other and our communities. That is a rather abstract conception, but it has very concrete manifestations. To help children understand it requires us to view it as a child does, in the here-and-now of the concrete. Community and relationship are those manifestations, and it is there that our work must begin.

Community is the context, the field on which the abstraction of democracy gets played, the stage on which it gets enacted. It is the setting in which we can help children experience its meaning. A further distinction must be made here between the fact and the experience of community. We can live in *a* community, as all of us do, but not experience ourselves as living *in* community; that is, without having a deep sense of being part of the fabric of it, without an awareness of being served by and of needing to attend to others and the whole. And we can be citizens of a democratic society by virtue of geography or birth, but have little real sense of being an integral part of it. There are many reasons why that might be: class, race, gender, personal experience, or individual temperament. But the feeling and recognition of being in community are critical. What is it that is felt and recognized in community? It is relationship.

In its deep, full meaning, democracy implies a consciousness of our essential relatedness to each other and all life, and it calls for action based on that consciousness. If community is the stage for democracy, relationship is the enactment. Relationship is the heart, the fundamental unit of community and democracy.

Relationship and Learning

Education for democracy, then, should take relationship as its unifying and guiding theme. That is true about *any* kind of education, really, because the substance of learning and the very nature of thinking are active processes of discovering and creating relationships among facts, information, perception, and phenomena. Whether we are concerned with reading or music, arithmetic or physics, the process of inquiry is always one of addressing and investigating relationships.

Creating education to match the relational nature of learning and thinking takes on added importance when we acknowledge our interdependence with each other and our membership in communities. Knowledge and understanding become collective. What we know and how we act upon our knowledge either diminishes or enriches all life on the planet. It is the job of education in a democratic society to help us understand this incrementally and act accordingly.

The Role of Curriculum

There are many ways to create structures (class meetings, problem-solving sessions, class jobs) in a class that encourage responsibility and a sense of community. It is not enough, however, to build relationship into the *way* the class runs without making it a focus of the *content of inquiry* as well. Having classroom forms be relationship oriented while classroom content remains detached makes the forms seem gimmicky and cynical after a while.

In any educational approach, curriculum serves as the vehicle through which children are systematically exposed to the knowledge and values that are deemed important. The importance of relationship and community can be conveyed through the curriculum of democratic education. The values of democracy—responsibility, respect, reverence for life (the three Rs of a curriculum of interdependence), commitment to the good of all and collective action (the two Cs?)—can be imparted by *what* the curriculum consists of and *how* that content is approached.

The basic skills of literacy such as reading, writing, spelling, and mathematics are essential *tools* with which children gain access and give expression to relationships. Curriculum in a democratic classroom must address these basic skills in many ways. Drill, repetition, and mastery are important for developing students' disciplined and confident use of those tools without which all our impassioned pleas of "Democracy!" would be meaningless.

I believe that schools must help children become both skilled and disciplined learners *and* responsible citizens. Through the curriculum a teacher can bring these two fundamental goals together in a mutually supportive relationship. The following is one illustration of my own attempts with first graders to use curriculum in this way.

The Post Office

One day two students in my class arranged a couple of chairs, a small stool, and some paper and envelopes and made a "post office" in the corner of the classroom. They occasionally sat there to do their work, draw pictures, or chat in their little office. It was a space just for them.

The post office remained for several weeks, hardly used and seemingly forgotten, and was suddenly rediscovered and avidly played with. After its rediscovery I began talking to the students about a post office. I asked them what they thought a post office did and what it needed in order to function. Simply talking about it in this way primed their interest. They began writing letters to classmates and then more students joined in. I took the interested class members on a trip to the neighborhood post office, got books about post offices from the library, and showed them the correct form for writing letters and addressing envelopes. With a student teacher, these children then made a mailbox from a cardboard box, created stamps and money, and began delivering mail to their classmates. As a result, more children became involved.

Consensus Decision Making

Discussions about the post office occurred almost daily in our morning class meetings. Decisions about expanding, about how many children could participate in it, about

finding a new location in the room, about responsibilities of those involved, about hours of operation, and about serving other classes were all reached by discussion and consensus. By consensus I mean that after discussing our topic thoroughly, taking various suggestions, and talking about the pros and cons of each idea, every child would state an opinion about his or her favored approach among those suggested. If anyone had an objection to a prevailing suggestion, she or he could state why, and we would talk more.

No decision was enacted unless everyone agreed to it. This meant asking children with a minority, dissenting opinion if they would be willing to try out the majority's idea for a while and see how it worked for them. Usually the children were willing to compromise, but there were times when we had to shelve a decision because we could not reach consensus. I did not want our decisions to be reached simply by voting, although the children would have accepted that and it would have been much easier. The advantage of consensus is that children do not lose their place of importance in a decision even when the decision does not go just the way they want it to. Their consent is still needed and their permission valued. By contrast, in a vote those who "lose" often feel personally defeated.

Another advantage of reaching decisions by consensus is that since I ask each child to state his or her preference, rather than putting the question to the class as a whole, the question can be repeated and clarified over and over and every child given a personal role to play. Consensus decisions are, however, very time consuming and have to be moved along at a quick enough pace so you do not lose half the class from sheer tedium. I have found that it is important that I maintain firm control of the process of reaching a consensus. I limit how long any one person talks and for how long the whole discussion goes on. On occasions when the class is losing attention and clearly not near a group decision, I will simply stop the discussion and leave it for another time. At times an issue has been so clouded by conflicting opinions that we left the question for several months before attempting to make a class decision again.

For example, we delayed a decision about interruptions. One day at our meeting, I told the children that it was annoying to me to be constantly interrupted when working with someone. I asked them how they felt about being interrupted themselves and when they were working with me. The response was quite varied. Some children said they did not like it. Others said that they did not mind and that it was important for them to be able to interrupt when they wanted to. The conversation went like this:

Teacher: Well, how do you feel when you're reading with me and other kids keep coming up to ask questions?

Bobby: I don't care.

Teacher: Really? You don't mind that?

Bobby: Well, I don't always like it but it doesn't bother me that much, and I want to be able to interrupt if I want to.

Niki: But do you think other kids like it? It's not fair to other kids. I don't like it!

Bobby: I don't care. I want to be able to do it when I want.

Carlie: But we don't like it. How would you like it if I did that to you?

Bobby: It wouldn't bother me.

Virginia: It's okay with me, too, if you do it. I don't mind.

I was a bit amazed by the attitude that it was okay to be interrupted. I could not tell how sincere these children were being or if they were being obstinate for its own sake. I kept my moral indignation to a minimum and resisted the temptation to push past their feelings to a solution to my dilemma.

After swallowing my disappointment at not being able to reach an agreement that I wanted for myself as well as the class, I said, as nonchalantly as I could, "Well I guess we're not going to be able to make a decision about this now. We haven't been able to work out an agreement that everyone feels good about. It's important that we all agree about a rule for the whole class." The meeting had gone on for half an hour and the children were having a difficult time sitting in our meeting circle without wiggling, lying down, talking to others, and dreaming. Any further attempts at talking about this knotty issue would have been futile. I suggested that the children think about interruptions and see whether being interrupted bothered them. I then suggested that we talk about it some other time. The class was more than happy to stop.

That was in early November. We did not discuss the issue of interruptions again until February. The second discussion had a very different tone from the first one. The few children who had resisted setting guidelines for getting my attention without breaking into ongoing conversations no longer seemed to feel that way. Everyone agreed that it was bothersome to be interrupted and that we had to figure out a way for each of us to get the attention we needed and the time we needed with each other.

Once we had reached agreement about the problem, we began to suggest and discuss possible solutions. The children stated their ideas, and I wrote them on a chart for everyone to see. After an idea was suggested, I often repeated or paraphrased it back to the class and the person who suggested it. Then I asked the class what they thought of the idea. I asked, "Does anyone have any objections to this suggestion?" With first graders I have had to explain what an objection is many times over each year, but they do come to understand that my inviting objections is an important part of the consensus process.

Children usually have quite reasonable objections, typically posed in the form of a "what if" problem. For example, in this discussion about interruptions one child suggested that when someone wants to talk to me about a problem, that person should say "excuse me" and wait patiently for me to finish what I am doing. Another child objected, "What if you just can't wait, and it's very, very important?" The objecting child's very real concern tempered the other children's willingness to adopt a rule that played to an adult morality which they generally accept (not surprisingly for seven-year-olds) without taking into account their own needs. "So what about that?" I said. "What happens when it's very important to ask me a question, and I'm busy with someone else?"

Nina: Maybe you could ask someone else.

Teacher: Oh, that's an interesting idea. So you could ask someone else for help instead of interrupting me and whoever I'm working with and instead of having to wait until I'm done?

Nina: Yeah.

Teacher: What do other kids think about that? Would that work for you?

The children liked this idea, and we went on. I continued to clarify the issue and the suggestions, to seek and help the children organize and articulate their thoughts. I continued to provide opportunities for their feelings to emerge and to pick up and amplify pertinent sentiments.

After half an hour of sometimes exciting and sometimes wandering talk, we finally came up with the new class rule about interruptions: If you need help, first try hard to figure your problem out yourself. If you can't, see if someone else can help you. If you still need help say, "excuse me" to Mr. Medville and wait patiently.

These class discussions got the children thinking about the problem and possible solutions. It helped them to take others into consideration in their perception of the problem. Having the rule provided a guideline for their behavior in confusing situations. Once it was in effect, the children often referred to the rule to remind others or themselves of the "appropriate" behavior to follow. They frequently asked me to read the rules to them or would read them themselves. Reaching a consensus about a problem like interruptions turns out to be a vehicle for expanding the consciousness of the children in many ways.

I believe that one of my roles in this consensus process is to help the children become aware of what they need and want and to make sure that some children's needs are not overlooked by more verbally assertive classmates.

What happens when we cannot reach consensus? We either delay the decision, as we did on the question about interruptions, we vote about the decision and the majority rules, or I make the decision. Not every decision in my class is a shared one. As the teacher, I make countless unilateral decisions every day. But when the decision is one that can be made together with the children, such as where in the room the class post office should be or how we can deliver the mail to the rest of the school, then we attempt to proceed by consensus.

Expanding the Post Office Study

As the post office group grew and interest expanded, the study of a post office became a larger part of the class curriculum. I took the whole class to the neighborhood post office as a way to feed and stimulate their understanding and interest. We were taken behind the scenes to see the kinds of work done in a post office and how the job of collecting and delivering mail for a community is organized and carried out.

Over half the class began working in our post office, and they decided to offer mail delivery services to others in the school. They wrote notices to post around the school and to take to other rooms announcing the existence of the post office, the prices, the hours, and the procedures. Then children went in small groups to each class

in the building to explain the idea further. Slowly students from other classes around ours, from kindergarten to sixth grade, began coming to our room to buy homemade stamps with homemade money and to deposit letters to be mailed to others in the school. This created new problems to solve. We had to decide how to organize the delivery system to cover the school. After a small group walked around the school, we divided the school into areas for delivery. Two children were given charge over each area.

I then formed three committees within the group, each with a different task. One was charged with mapping the school to guide mail delivery, first by building a model with blocks, then drawing one on paper. This was quite difficult to do. The school building is very large and complex, housing over six hundred students, and it stretched the children's ability to visualize and reproduce it. It was a rigorous intellectual challenge for them to put the various parts of the school that they experience, one at a time, into a coherent whole, built to scale. They built a model of the school out of unit blocks that was fairly accurate, but they were unable to translate that into a two-dimensional drawing. A second committee had the job of sorting the mail according to its destination in the school and of maintaining the office. A third committee was assigned to chart the volume of mail delivered each day.

The children's favorite part of the post office was the actual operation of it. On the post office counter was a cardboard box painted red, white, and blue with "U.S. Mail" written in white letters. They loved to sit behind the counter, doing their daily reading or writing or math work, just waiting for someone to come into the room from another class with a letter to mail. They could sell them stamps, show them correct ways to address an envelope, or simply receive the letter. Children would vie for an opportunity to be the clerk in this way. They fairly glowed with satisfaction and pride after each interaction across the counter. The other "most fun" part of the project was the delivery, which they all had opportunities to do. They began to feel quite confident in their ability to find their way around the school building. They began to get a good feel for the school and for many more children in it. They functioned as a working community within the class. By the time the project ended (it ran out of steam in early March) every child in the class, on a completely voluntary basis, had played some part in the operation of the post office. In addition, they served an important function for the school community (they delivered sixty-three letters on Valentine's Day and they often delivered packages or notes from a teacher to the front office). They made connections while they explored the school and their places in it.

Skill Improvement through the Post Office

Through the post office project children practiced and improved skill areas. They counted, recorded, and then graphed the number of letters that passed through. They worked with "money," making it, counting it, and giving change. They learned and applied letter-writing skills, thereby improving their handwriting, spelling, and composition. They devised systems of sorting mail and then tested their effectiveness. They read a variety of things, from books about post offices to the letters they received. By simultaneously studying the workings of a real post office and operating one of their

own that played a valuable role in the class and the school, they developed a deeper understanding not only of this specific institution and its function in a community, but also of what a community is in a more general way. Any in-depth exploration of one aspect of a neighborhood or a city leads to more general knowledge of the whole. The whole school and the whole neighborhood in which they live became a bit more comprehensible to them.

They also developed their mapping skills, observation skills, and the skills required to work collectively on a project. They were, after the post office was finished, better readers, writers, spellers, and adders. They were more solidified as a group and more a part of the school. They developed problem-solving abilities that were clearly in evidence the following year in second grade. Other teachers reported to me that children coming from this experience, and others like it, could initiate discussions about problems and solutions in their classes and could organize their own thoughts to proceed through difficult social and moral issues.

The post office was born out of the children's play and extended to become a legitimate part of the curriculum. Throughout the life of the project, play, or the opportunity for children to freely express their ideas and feelings in ways that are most meaningful for them, remained an essential component, a means of integration for them and a guide for me.

Exploration and Expression

The sort of learning process that I have been describing involves two main steps. The first step is to explore a subject as fully and concretely as possible. The second is to give expression to what has been explored in ways that require children to attend to the details of their exploration and enable them to recreate the experience. Talking, writing, drawing, enacting with movement or drama, and constructing models are some forms of expression. The expression must have standards of form that vary with the age of the children. The formation of letters, spelling, and rules of grammar in writing are examples of such standards.

Play

The expressive step should also offer the children opportunities to play with the various components of their learning. By play I mean experimentation with ideas, roles, or phenomena that is free from the necessity to adhere to a preconceived "correct" notion. Adults play. Children play. Creative thinking always involves play. We play with color and line when we draw. We play with a new machine as we figure out its parameters of efficient operation. A child plays with the phonics of written language as she or he works to understand its patterns and form. We play with meanings derived from a novel.

By playing with an idea, a thought, a fantasy, or a fact, a person moves it around, jiggles it, fits it into other ideas, thoughts, fantasies, or facts. Although play can occur mentally —strictly in people's minds—all through the elementary years children should be given the opportunity to play concretely with materials for expression, whether those materials are paper and paint or the child's own body.

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The subject of an exploration becomes owned by the learner through creative and playful expression of the context. When learning is owned by learners, then it is natural for them to take responsibility for it because they have given the learning a form that is meaningful.

Expressing an idea in a variety of forms is important if that idea is to become assimilated by the individual. Expressing an idea also moves the idea from the purely personal realm into a social realm. Ideas and knowledge gather meaning through the act of expression and social practice.

Teacher-Initiated Projects

It is not necessary to wait for children to initiate something like the post office. There are many ways for teachers to build in this sort of curriculum. Teacher-initiated curriculum is especially important in the upper elementary grades, when time for free play or exploration becomes less available and less acceptable in most educational systems. The post office was an extended project that came out of the children's play and not something that could have been planned in advance. There are, however, ideas that can be structured and implemented in a more predictable way.

The Neighborhood

An example of a teacher-initiated curriculum project in my classroom was a study of the children's neighborhood, beginning with the children's own homes. The class visited some of the homes. They walked the neighborhood and made notes of different kinds of houses and buildings. They wrote stories about their houses, their bedrooms, and about imaginary houses. They drew pictures of their ideas. For homework they measured and mapped various rooms in their houses. They made graphs representing the different colors of the houses in the class, the materials of construction, and the sizes. They related their houses to the homes of animals, especially those that could be observed firsthand, like the homes of birds, insects, and the classroom snails, fish, and guinea pigs.

Each child then made a house out of clay and painted it. When the clay houses were ready, the children, working in groups of ten, were given a piece of green posterboard that was three by six feet. I told them to imagine that they were settlers coming to this green field to live and build a neighborhood. They had to decide together what they needed for a neighborhood and how to set it up. They talked and argued among themselves and finally decided that the first thing to do was to pick a spot for their houses. The second thing was to make roads, and then put in trees and flowers. My role was to set the parameters and to help them if they could not make a decision. Eventually they made clay fences and a playground composed of toothpicks. As they played with the neighborhood over several weeks, they added a lake, some boats, and a park.

As the study continued, the class turned to the commercial aspects of a neighborhood as a necessary complement to residential areas. They took walking trips to the main commercial area near the school. There were "overview" walks in which they went down the street, noted the kinds of stores it had and wrote their findings down

on paper. They looked carefully at the establishments on the busy street to see the ways in which information about each business and its services or products was communicated to the public. Store names, signs with pictures, and window displays all gave direct or indirect clues.

They took prearranged trips to a bakery, fish store, grocery store, fire station, bank, post office, a small arcade housing a number of stores and offices, and a local restaurant. In each place the children were taken "behind the scenes" and given a glimpse of the broad workings of each type of office or store. They saw where supplies were stored, where products were prepared for use or consumption, where paperwork was done. They saw workers doing their jobs from the workers' side of the counter.

Back at school the children and I discussed what they experienced. They wrote about it in their journals and in stories that would go into a class book about their neighborhood.

When the children had gathered a good deal of information through trips, books, and discussions, it was time to help them integrate the many aspects of the neighborhood they had explored into a view of it as a whole.

Integration of Information

Integration in the study of the neighborhood entailed putting the various aspects—houses, a grocery store, and a bank, for example—into relationship with each other as well as exploring further the relationships within each one. Within a house, for example, one can look at the relationship between what people living in a house need (or might want) and the kinds of rooms, tools, or furniture that are in it. An example in a bank might be the relationship between the services provided for customers and the various jobs people have. With older children (nine to twelve), the bank's role in the local economy could be explored. An even more sophisticated iteration for junior high or high school students might be the relationship between how the bank invests its money, pressures for economic development, and the need for environmental integrity.

For the first graders, integration of their experiences and perceptions of a neighborhood involved not only discussions, art work, and writing, but also building a model neighborhood with unit blocks, modeling clay, and construction paper. The construction zone was marked off with masking tape into a grid defining individual areas in which to build. Children were expected to pick something to build from a list the class had drawn up of what a neighborhood should have. That list was based on what they now knew about a neighborhood.

The children worked in their miniature neighborhood as part of their daily work routines. They built, embellished, and played. I encouraged them to take more detailed looks at what they were doing by asking them questions, supplying new information, or making suggestions. Children added signs, tickets, and a screen to the movie theater and shelves, counters, and food to the grocery store.

The project continued until the children seemed to have integrated as much information as they could for the time. I made that judgment by talking to them about their work and by observing their play. After two weeks the children's play began to

become predictable and stagnant. At that point I had to decide what to do. They would have needed additional information and experiences to deepen their understanding of the subtleties and complexities of a neighborhood. Older children might have explored sewage, electrical, and water systems, with far-ranging implications for the science, math, and language arts curricula. But for most six year olds, those extensions would have been too conceptually complex.

It is up to the teacher to decide whether the children are ready for newer and more complex work and whether the teacher is ready for the preparation, organization, and work in gathering materials that further exploration would entail. I did not pursue the project further but rather left the children to play with or change their work in the blocks or to stop altogether.

Challenges of the Curriculum

There is no absolutely correct way to proceed. This sort of learning involves a great deal of work on a teacher's part. It is often scary, for there are no recipes or assurances of success. Not all projects I have initiated or play I have built upon have borne fruit. Sometimes I have picked up what seemed like a promising idea or bit of play, and after failing to get any sustained interest in it, have had to change course and cope with my own feelings of failure and disappointment.

A democracy needs leaders to inspire, to lead, and, of course, to follow the will of the people. Likewise, in a democratic classroom a teacher must lead, inspire, direct, demand, and teach. These roles must be carried out, however, in a spirit of following the natures, capacities, and needs of the children.

Organization

A curriculum built upon the exploration and explication of relationships involves many variables and complex dynamics, and it can be daunting at times. It is therefore important to be clearly organized. I have struggled most with the organizational aspects of this kind of teaching.

To be organized means, to me, three things. First is seeing the children as they are: seeing what ideas or emotions they are grappling with, trying to understand their origins, diagnosing their strengths and weaknesses. Second, organization means determining and thinking through what I can do to help them explore, with depth, their feelings and ideas. Third, it involves being ready and able to create structures: of class time, materials, experiences, expectations, and groupings of children that will aid that exploration. Organization is a continuous process of watching, thinking, and acting. No matter how intuitive or dynamic a teacher might be, a clear sense of organization (without being rigid) is an absolute necessity.

Values and Curriculum

The health of a democracy depends upon the degree to which the citizens maintain the values of democracy, which I have defined as respect, reverence, responsibility, commitment to the good of all, and collective action. Constructing a curriculum that fosters those values will help educate our children to be responsible citizens of

democracy. The goal of such a curriculum is to make our interdependence available for a child to experience, explore, understand, and appreciate.

Not all curricula can be selected with democracy in mind. There are many skills to acquire, ideas to explore, and tasks to be done that do not address interdependence or collective action. It is important, however, for a teacher to have a broad vision of the development of children, the nature of learning, and the health of the society underlying all decisions made in a classroom; and it is important to make those decisions with the well-being of both the individual and the society in mind.

Overt and Covert Curriculum

Curriculum denotes what is studied in a classroom—the overt curriculum. It also includes the values and skills that children learn from the structure governing the class—what I call the covert curriculum. Although this essay is primarily concerned with the overt curriculum—the subject matter of the classroom— it cannot stand alone.

The structure governing the daily life of a class must provide the basis for an examination and experience of community. Class meetings in which problems have been discussed and class rules have been formulated by the children provide a forum in which to discuss problems encountered in a group's attempt to build a pilgrim settlement or work out the organization for their post office. Contracts or other structures that make children a part of the process of setting up work expectations and make them accountable for their work help them gain a sense of responsibility. Cooperative games and classroom jobs help build a strong sense of community in the class. The sense of responsibility and community fostered in the class forms the basis from which an understanding of interdependence in the world outside the school can be fashioned.

Guidelines for Curriculum Development

For those curriculum projects that directly address the values of community and democracy, I would offer the following general guidelines. Investigate *phenomena* that can be observed and experienced. These tend to be thought provoking and make relationships accessible to children from several points of view. *Social phenomena* such as cities, other civilizations and cultures, or a transportation system; *natural phenomena* such as those of biology or botany; *the intersection of social and natural phenomena* such as agriculture or geography; and *mechanical* or *physical phenomena* such as magnets, electricity, or motors all offer rich ranges of relationships and information. They can be explored in hands-on, active ways. All are open-ended, leading into other realms. All are readily accessible to young, curious minds on varying levels of complexity.

Choose projects that allow children to work and think together and that enable them to grapple with some of the problems that they are studying. Look for investigations that involve extensive time, thought, and effort. Making a model of a Greek city with wood or clay, putting together and operating a hand printing press, establishing a recycling program in a school, or interviewing elderly people in the community and writing a short story or play are examples of curriculum projects that can provide work

that is collective, integrated, and demanding. These are projects in which children would, by the content of their study ***and*** by the shared process of working it out, be able to develop a concrete understanding of the subject at hand.

Conclusion

The kinds of projects and curricula I have described do not by any means constitute everything about a classroom. Responsibility is important, but it can be oppressive if it is every other word or thought from a teacher. A classroom should not become a factory geared to the production of "good citizens." Every aspect of a classroom should not have to say "Here's a relationship." But in the world of phenomena, the relationships are always present, ready to be explored. They are where the action and fun are. Children are drawn to those explorations. I think that is what motivates children to learn.

The basic message of a relationship-centered curriculum is simply this: We need each other. We are responsible for each other. We need and are responsible to the entire fabric of life on this planet. Children, even young ones, can be helped to understand this through a curriculum that fosters interdependence and encourages them to experience their own role in the life of the classroom.

Young children cannot be expected to comprehend the subtle complexities of democracy and interdependence. As teachers, however, we can help them take the first steps. To do that, we must ourselves develop a far-reaching vision of the relatedness of all life and the imposing task of preparing children to become skilled, caring, and committed citizens of our world.

EMPOWERING THE EDUCATED: STRATEGIES FOR EFFICACY

April Laskey Aerni and Deborah R. First

In the mailroom of a small, liberal arts college in Rochester, New York, two faculty members—one an economist, one a science educator—began a conversation that grew out of shared concerns about their learners. These students, seeing their world filled with an array of economic, political, and religious conflicts, often spoke of their limited hope for the future and their sense of powerlessness. As individuals, without a sense of efficacy, many saw activism as an aberrant behavior, an activity done in response to a problem, but, from the perspective of the onlooker, one that was devoid of the hope of effecting change. One student expressed in her journal:

> *But, what can I do??? I wondered, "why is she* telling me all this?" I'm getting so upset, and I can't do anything about it. I AM going to write to the Senator and to the Congressional Representative like she said, but, will that do anything??? Who am I?"*

We, the two faculty members, were not the only people grappling with the issue of student efficacy and empowerment. Our college, founded by the Sisters of St. Joseph, has a mission to encourage community service and activism in its students and faculty. In 1988 the college began implementing a revised college core curriculum that called for a new set of upper-level courses that would be interdisciplinary in nature and that were intended to "help students develop skills, pursue truth from a variety and a depth of perspectives, and thus explore their responsibilities as individuals as well as members of the larger human community."

The practice of democracy may well be one of the most empowering forms of participation. By focusing on social and political equity, by valuing and protecting the

**"She" is a nun who has had many years of work with the people of El Salvador in their villages, in the refugee camps, and in the repatriation efforts.*

individual within the community, by listening to the voices of all of its constituents, a democracy empowers its participants to resolve conflicts that emerge out of differing social or political conditions and to generate conditions that may lead to greater justice. We saw clearly that the practices of peacemaking provided a strong under-girding for the practice of democracy. If the students were to participate in democracy, we needed to awaken them to the stake that each of them, as well as all citizens, had in the decisions that would govern their lives. They needed to become active, empowered citizens.

It was at this point that we developed our course on war and peace. Our course objective states: "We will start from the premise that peace is not an absence of war. It is a way of living and a view of the world as well as a state of action and readiness. Peace is not possible without understanding both war and peace. It is also not possible without personal action." This objective led to a requirement that students do community service/volunteer work as part of the course and that their final written project revolve around an analysis of how they could contribute to peace through their lives and actions. Our essay examines this course, which we team taught in 1990 and 1991, and the strategies we used to attempt to empower students. Our students' journals have provided the primary material for this essay.

Course Content and Strategies

The course was structured around building connections between ideas and events in the students' experienced world and those to be found in art, economics, history, literature, music, philosophy, politics, and religion available to us as a learning community. Given that learning is enhanced when the student is involved at the emotional as well as the intellectual level, the strategies we used, and the activities in which we participated, were chosen for their intensive learner involvement, their highly experiential nature, and/or their potential emotional content. Finally, decisions about what experiences to structure and what materials to select were shaped by our commitment to being responsive to emergent concerns and to using primary sources as often as possible. Implicit in this was our recognition that the students themselves, and the concerns they generated, were also "primary sources."

The content of the course was rooted in both the theoretical and the personal. The readings, across individual content areas, were chosen to reflect a range of time, experience, and belief. From *The Iliad* to *All Quiet on the Western Front,* from an exhibit of painter Jacob Lawrence's series on Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass to an exhibit of sculptor George Segal's Holocaust Memorial, from an in-class sharing by a once-young woman of her delivery into Auschwitz to Jean Elshtain's *Women and War,* from the film *Cry Freedom* to the documentary *Weapons of the Spirit,* students were, in each case, asked to uncover the sense of the conflict and to place themselves squarely within it. Unless students saw themselves as potential participants in and contributors to the conflicts, we believed they would be unlikely to invent or invest in attitudes and behaviors that would lead to conflict reduction or resolution. Unless students experienced the ways in which we and they became invested in issues, positions, or conditions, they would not be able to envision those issues from another perspective.

Our primary strategies are well known and often used: journal writing, personal stories by speakers, discussion, and planned out-of-the-classroom experiences. Often the content helped to define the strategies or processes we would use to teach; what better way to make Thoreau's "Resistance to Civil Government" meaningful than to hear from one of our own faculty members and a student who were held responsible for personal acts of civil disobedience in relation to the manufacture, transport, and storage of nuclear weapons. All participants kept journals that were used each day in at least one of several ways. At the beginning of class, students might be asked to write for five minutes on an idea, person, or event related to our topic for the day and then share one sentence with the class as a whole. The process focused their thinking and provided a beginning for group discussions. Students might be asked to write for five or ten minutes at the end of a class to either consolidate their understanding, make connections with prior classes, reflect on their feelings about a presentation, or pose some questions that need response. Each reading, presentation, or experience done for or within the course was first summarized and then reflected on in the journals. As we explored a topic, students might be asked to locate a response that they were willing to share, that they felt represented a stumbling block for them, or that caused them to examine, reflect on, or shift their thinking or beliefs.

Students came into the course with the range of writing skills (technical and expressive) found at any college. Several were encountering writing as a form of thinking for the first time and approached early assignments as exercises with rules unknown to them. Others welcomed the opportunity to link their academic work with their feelings about the subjects. There were those students, quiet and tentative in class, who were richly expressive in their journals—experimenting with ideas, asking for instructor verification or clarification, and linking events in their own past with issues under discussion. As readers of the journals, we were guided by three principles in our responses to the individual writers:

1. Technical competence warranted a response only if its absence interfered with communication, in which event the student was apprised of the help available at the campus Writing Lab.
2. No readings, experiences, or discussions emerge from a vacuum. They needed to be linked to prior events, ideas, or readings.
3. The particular focus of our work was discovering the nature of making war and making peace, discerning our own and others' contributions to either effort in any one context, and then practicing the craft of peacemaking.

As the teachers, we planned discussions whose purposes were to generate questions, to give practice in critical thinking and to provide a platform for stating beliefs. For example, in order to help students distinguish between information, opinion and rhetoric in the printed media during the war in the Gulf, students were asked to gather information—for several weeks—from sources as diverse as military recruitment stations, relief agencies, the United Nations, left- and right-wing publications, and university faculty whose specialty or whose home was in the Middle East. The discussion that followed was a structured, highly focused, interactive verbal exchange. Asking

the students what they needed to know before they listened to our guest speaker on El Salvador was central to their experiencing the discontinuities between the background we bring to any circumstance, what we think we need to know, what we are given from the sources used, and, finally, what new picture we piece together.

Often we assigned tasks such as identifying key needs of conflicting parties in local, regional, or national issues or developing scripted dialogues that resolved interpersonal disputes to groups of three or four participants. The results of their efforts were shared and examined through a discussion that was both task oriented and insight driven.

We also planned discussions whose purpose was to explore the issues and questions emerging from the students' interior lives in relation to the course. Unlike the more structured discussions, which were largely done as a whole group, these discussions were often done in two smaller groups with each of us acting as facilitator. While sometimes highly animated, they were at other times seemingly long periods of silence. It was often out of these silences that a feeling about things, a public sharing of a privately held belief, a tentative step toward weaving together some loosely related readings would emerge. We learned, as the course evolved, to welcome such quiet moments. As one student noted:

> *I enjoy our class discussions although sometimes I feel tension in the room. Stating an opinion sometimes gets you into trouble. The reason I like open discussions is that if you want to say something you say it. It gets me prepared and makes it easier to talk openly, because I used to find it difficult to do.*

Current Issues and Student Needs

Remaining attentive to our students's issues, fears, and concerns and using these as integral components of the course of study meant the course outline needed to be highly responsive. The vitality in such responsiveness was clear during the Spring semester, when Operation Desert Storm in the Persian Gulf was initiated. The readings we selected not only transcended time, but were also practical sources of information and emphatic experience for our time. For example, readings about "just war" theory came alive for these students as they tangled with the complexities of whether this war was just according to Augustinian principles:

> *Today I felt isolated, alone, and fearful because of my beliefs. I found many stories too emotional to handle. I found myself enraged at those who protested President Bush's policy and those who protested the war. I realized at that very moment, that I was supportive of the war, I believed and still believe that what we are doing is right. It's so hard to actually live in a time of war, to feel the fear and emotion. It is so new to me and confusing.... [Later] Though I support the war I cannot make the claim that it is just for I do not feel that every effort for negotiation was made.*
>
> *I also am finding it difficult to decide if the Mid-east crisis was justified. It is*

difficult to have a consensus on the criteria for a just war. We may feel that we were justified in our actions however they may not be part of the just-war theory.

It is very bothersome and frustrating to know that eight of my friends that I went to school with are over in the Persian Gulf risking their lives for something as frivolous as this.... I am only nineteen years old and my friends in the Gulf are only nineteen years old. They are just beginning their lives. They are too young to die. Our generation has never had to experience such a state of confusion as this war has forced us to face, so please understand our disgust and apprehension.

I believe that the protesters will do nothing but decrease morale in our troops. I feel it is impossible mentally for the soldiers to feel support with these protests.... Where would we be as a country without our wars!.... [Later] I feel that all of Augustine's criteria for a just war were not fulfilled. The issue of America's dependence on oil brings the just war theory into question.

We often interacted with the students through our responses to their journal entries. While much of this response was given directly, written by us into their journals, we channeled some into topics that were not part of our original course design. One such topic—the nature of citizenship—emerged as it became increasingly clear that students who supported the war (initially, most of the class) had not considered that there could or should be a relationship between their beliefs and their actions.

Discovering Citizenship

In the students' discussions and writings about the war in the Gulf, they talked about the war in terms of rights being violated. They also supported the war but were adamantly opposed to a draft. To help clarify the relationship between beliefs and actions, we asked them to respond to the statement "There should be mandatory public service for all citizens, male and female, between the ages of eighteen and twenty." They were to move to one side of the room if they strongly agreed and to the other side if they strongly disagreed. Two of seventeen students stayed on the agree side of the room, while the others immediately moved to the wall on the strongly disagree side of the room. Intended as a fifteen-minute exercise to get us into the topic for the day, this turned into a heated discussion that lasted for two classes and to which the students responded passionately in their journals:

To me citizenship means living in a particular country with its particular rights and privileges. I expect to be free to develop into the person I want to without being forced to do or be something I'm not.... I really had a problem with today's discussion about mandatory compulsory service. I strongly feel that the beauty of America is the fact that every individual has the freedom of choice. It's a hard decision to make but I firmly feel that the right to self comes before the right to country. I personally feel that "Civic Duty" is a choice made by the individual. I don't feel I need to be part of it.

> *My country has not given me enough so that I can feel obligated to serve it. My country does not guarantee me a job, in fact cannot find me a job unless I take the first step. It does not educate me past high school, once again I must make the choice to continue on. Therefore, I should also have the CHOICE to "Civic Duty."*

We realized that their understanding of citizenship as involving only rights might have contributed to their feelings of powerlessness. They saw rights as things to which they are entitled, as things they are "given" because they are citizens. It was clear that our students could not articulate a strongly felt sense of responsibility or duty to match their strongly felt sense of their rights. This led us to find some readings on citizenship; this theme wove in and out of our discussions and their journal writings for the rest of the semester. As they grappled with the idea that citizenship entails duties and responsibilities and as they performed their community service, they began to understand that if they took on responsibility they had power over their duties, over what they did or did not do as citizens:

> *I thought the question [should there be compulsory service] was very difficult, yet I was pleased to have had to think about it because I did not leave my thoughts about the question in the classroom. I continued and still do wonder about it. I thought it was very difficult because I was not grown [up] with such a rule. As we discussed in class, that would have made an extremely big difference.*

As they read and discussed more:

> *[The article "Origins of Duty"] has a notion of connectedness that is implicit in the idea of responsibility. It is important for others to realize this responsibility we have as a citizen for the survival of our country. This made me re-think my opinion of duty and I have realized how important it is. I don't think it matters what duty one does whether it's volunteering at a hospital, helping clean up the parks or military service but it makes for a better country and one that can survive.*

> *[After reading "Origins of Duty"] all I can say is "Wow." I was really struck by the statement: students were asked "what made America special" — most of them answered "our rights and freedoms." They had 1/2 the picture of democracy. There was no mention of civic participation and responsibility—is this ignored? Well, I thought about this, and I remembered back to the class when we were asked "should civil service be mandatory." I was one of the students who believed—no! America is a democracy and thus we have rights and freedoms! I guess I was only 1/2 right. We have duties as well.*

A student who had most strongly disagreed in our initial discussion in class wrote the following in her final project:

The most valuable point I am taking away with me is that I learned the importance of personal responsibility. For myself to become more peaceful, I feel that I will need to fulfill my civic duties and give back something to my community. By community, I do not mean just one's family, school or church community but the community to me is everyone as a whole. We are the future and we need to take this extra responsibility and begin to shape the peaceful world we want to live in.... In our society, we are socialized by the media's propaganda and the power of the government not to take this extra initiative and take responsibility for our duties as a citizen. We are taught to be individuals and to compete with one another. To overcome this propaganda and power, I believe it is first necessary for myself to take this initiative and to act as a dutiful citizen.

Learning through Service

A useful instructional strategy often has less to do with what the teacher does and more to do with what the teacher enables her/his learners to do. Believing that empowerment implies a linking of action to a knowledge base, and that knowledge emerges out of the active process of testing and reflecting upon one's ideas in the real world, we required each student to engage in a volunteer community service activity. We gave them a list of agencies with which the college had a relationship, but they were free to go outside the list if they chose. Students often chose a position based on personal experiences:

I am doing my volunteering at the Rochester Friendly Home. After having my great-grandmother in a nursing home I quickly learned that life [there] can be terribly lonely and frightening. Many of the people felt isolated and forgotten about.... I hope to at least provide an ear for conversation while letting them know that at least someone cares for and respects them.

It was in the volunteering that students began to see how conflict could evolve within a group seemingly committed to resolving conflicts or community problems; how the behavior of an individual could work to resolve problems or to foster enmity; how institutions of change rested on individuals who could change. A student who chose commitment to a weekly peace protest as his community service wrote:

What I found was that this so called "peace protest" even encourages conflict from both sides (peace protesters were on one side of the street and pro-war groups on the other). They seemed like they both started with a common goal of wanting peace, but this is what I saw. It seemed that this peace rally has turned into a shouting match.

Another worked in a soup kitchen:

The problem is ... that we are not allowed to give leftover food to people hanging around the soup kitchen or any of the guests eating a meal. It is very important that we are all consistent about this. This is appalling. I

can't stand it. Many times we had enough to feed more on a cold winter day—even to give a bag lunch to people who don't get in would be OK. But change doesn't come easy at a church-run bureaucratic organization.

Most of the residents [at a homeless mission] were very closed to one another. There were two young men who didn't get along at first. There was a lot of racial tension between them. On this occasion, the black man had a leg injury and needed the seat from the white man. It wasn't an issue of wants but of needs. There was definitely an understanding between them ... they shared a common experience which united them.

At times it is a hassle dealing with the homeless, but I think if I was homeless and had to eat at the kitchen for survival I would want it to be pleasant. The really sad thing is seeing kids down there eating.

Learning through Art and Film

The classes that clearly evoked the strongest emotional responses, as evidenced in the students' journals, and that led them to make connections between their experiences and theory i[illegible]ed the visual and the personal, which helped them link feelings and cognition. T[illegible] classes offered less option for control (by the teachers) or for detachment (by the students). While they were carefully planned, the actual instructional events were defined by participants' familiarity with and responses to the experiences, and by interpersonal dynamics between the speaker/stimulus and the students:

[After seeing a slide presentation on El Salvador] I remember leaving class ... with the image of a beautiful child I had seen on her slides. She was a little girl with dark skin, beautiful black eyes, and long brown baby-fine hair. The clothes were ragged, her face dirty, but you didn't notice these details at first, the first thing you are drawn to when looking at this little girl was her eyes. They were not filled with sorrow, pain, but determination. I can still see her in my mind, and I wish that she could live in a world of no oppression, a world of freedom, a world where she would not have to bear witness to the atrocities she has been forced to focus her eyes on. I wish that I could change places with that little girl, so she could be as fortunate as I am, even though I complain about what I lack, to her it is everything she could dream of.

For me personally, being a history major at Nazareth College, this series of art work [the Jacob Laurence series on the lives of Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass] was an eye opener. I mean that in the sense that when studying about slavery in the history books much of the realism and vividness about the horrible conditions which the slaves lived under was lost.

I am very glad I was given the chance to see this movie, Cry Freedom *... In freshman seminar last year we discussed the situation in South Africa, but I never realized that it was that bad.*

The pictures [in the Laurence exhibit] were very small, as compared to other pictures, but they were powerful. As I read the inscriptions my whole body felt the hurt, the pain and at the same time the determination that these people had. The colors were so bright. Interestingly in each picture there were three basic colors, red, brown, and yellow. These are the colors of Africa.

Growing Toward Peace

In *Ways of Peace* Gray Cox developed a theory that became the premise of our course: that peace is not an absence of conflict. Rather, it is a way of living, a state of readiness, a form of action, and a view of the world. While the students allowed us to promote that position as an academic truth, their early journal entries confirm a very different set of beliefs. To them, peace was an unattainable, or at best transitory absence of conflict, which they often envisioned as natural in a condition of tranquility:

Images of peace—calm, happiness, peace movements
Peace—co-existence of all individuals everywhere

As much as I hate to admit it, war can be a means of keeping or bringing about peace. Peace is races, creeds, colors and nations, sexes, animals—everything on God's green earth (at least the parts they have not chopped down yet) living together as one, and loving one another, as equally and unconditionally as is possible.

By the end of the course, the way the students viewed peace had changed significantly. The following are from their final projects:

I strongly believe that this course has changed my understanding of peace and how to achieve it. I've come to realize that a person must achieve peace within themselves. As a result they can put forth a greater effort in trying to achieve peace in the world.

It is important to start on a small scale so that no one will become overwhelmed with the infinite problems facing the world today. It is very easy to sit back and say, "Well, there is nothing I can do about it." The act of discussing issues with family and friends can help make them all see there actually is something they can do to effect change.

Wow! radical idea—can personal growth actually lead to social change? I realize that this process is not a quick-fix solution toward solving the problems in my family which have taken years to accumulate, but it is a step.

This class raised questions which were important not only in the educational aspect but also on the community aspect of learning. I have noticed that I have become much better at recording my thoughts and questions in relation to particular questions which were raised.

All of these things I aim to do with my life have been inspired by my War and Peace class ... my eyes have been opened to another life. Where was that life before? Did I avoid it? I think I did. I will continue to write letters when I can. There is also a good chance that when I complete college I will travel and see for myself all that we have talked about in class. Maybe my intentions for the future will bring peace within myself and I will always be willing to add to the collective effort of peacing.

Both you and I have the ability to support and encourage peace.

Through their journals, the students recorded their growth into new ways of seeing, interpreting, and acting on the wars and peaces in their world. While they held onto their sense of the personal as the place to begin, they discovered that they had the capacity to respond and act in ways that extended their "personal" to include a broader sense of community. They described their discovery, still taking root, that to have an effect in and on their world they first needed to allow the world to speak to them in ways that might change who they were or how they saw things. They began to see themselves and their lives as legitimate expressions of a set of beliefs. In some sense, they began their journey toward efficacy in the world.

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